

# CHRISTIAN RIGHTEOUSNESS

OR

"JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH"

A STUDY IN THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS

*Explaining*

THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL OF SALVATION

*Prepared by*

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*For Use in*

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*of*

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
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*"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst  
after righteousness"—CHRIST*

*"I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for  
therein is revealed a righteousness"—PAUL*

# Paul's Letter to the Christians at Rome

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# ON KNOWING GOD

*preached by*  
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## ON KNOWING GOD

Were you ever bothered by the fact that we cannot see God? We believe in Him, but we have never seen Him. We come to Church to worship Him, but we do not see Him. We declare that "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth," but we cannot see Him. But if we cannot see Him, how can we know him?

But wait! We know many things that we cannot see. We cannot see the air, but we know that it is all around us. We cannot see the strange force that we call electricity, but we know that it exists. Ether is a substance or a force that we cannot possibly see, but scientists tell us that it fills all space. We cannot see thought and ideas, but they are very real to us. We cannot see the spirit of man, but without the spirit the body would be a dead and lifeless thing indeed.

"But still, we ought to be able to see God if He exists," someone may insist. To such a one we repeat the story of the Christian in the Roman Empire. He was hailed before the Emperor and mocked for his faith in an unseen God. "If your God is real, said the Emperor, "Show him to me so that I can see him." "Come out of doors," the Christian replied. "Now," said the Emperor, "Look straight up at the sun." But the Emperor stopped short and cried, "You fool, nobody can look straight up at the sun without losing his eyesight." "Ah," said the Christian, "If your eyes are too weak to look at the sun, which is only a ball of fire, how can you expect to see the infinite and eternal God?"

No, we cannot look straight up at the sun, but we live by the light of the sun. We cannot see the air, but we breathe it, and in it we "live, and move, and have our being." It is something intangible, invisible, but the most powerful superfortress could not rise one inch from the ground without it. We cannot see the ether that fills all space, but through it come the rays of the sun that flood the earth. We cannot see electricity, but we can see its

effects in the dynamo, the incandescent lamp, and in the crash of the thunderstorm. We cannot see the thought and ideas, but we know their all-important consequences in our daily lives. We cannot see the spirit of man, but we know its presence and its power through the deeds of the body.

So we know God through the visible world which He has created. We begin life with this world of creation all about us. It is vast and wonderful. Overhead is the arching sky of blue, underneath is the green earth. It is a world of things, and forms, and colors, and law and order. It is full of treasures, and minerals, and elements and throbbing life. To see this world is to know that Somebody made it.

It is as if you entered a beautiful garden and beheld its lovely plants and flowers. If you stopped to think you would say, "This garden belongs to someone, it has a gardener, somebody has planted it." Of course you might be unthinking enough to become so engrossed with the plants and flowers that you forget all about the gardener. That is what John Henry Jowett, the great preacher, said of John Burroughs, the great naturalist; "Poor John, he loved the garden, but he never knew the Gardener!" What a fatal blunder! Or when you see a beautiful and well-built house, you know that somebody planned it and built it that way. Or perhaps you see a shiny automobile on the street and you ask yourself, "What make is it,?" or more correctly, "Who made it?" For it is simply inconceivable that that car came there by itself. You know that somebody designed it, and you know also that he who made it is greater than the thing he made.

But this world is something infinitely more intricate and wonderful than a garden, a house, or a car. It must have a Maker, and the Maker must be greater than the world He made. This world is like a garden, and its Maker is the great Gardener. It is like a home, and He is the great Builder. It is like some vast machine with things in it like light, and power, and electricity, which operates according to the laws of physics, and its Maker is the great Mechanic. This world is a world of breathless beauty, and

its Maker is the great Artist. This world is a world of law, and order, and ideas, and unchanging principles, and its Maker is the great Thinker. As Sir James Jeans, one of the great living scientists, put it, "The universe reveals the presence of an infinite mind." Yes, truly,

"The Heavens declare the glory of God,  
And the firmament showeth His handiwork."

We also know God through the man that He has made. Man is the last and greatest object in creation. And as God has made Himself known to a degree in everything which He has made, so He is best known by the greatest object He has made. As every garden reveals the care of the gardener, every house the plan of its builder, and every car the skill of its designer, so every man reveals something of the greatness of his Maker. We know therefore that God is like man; He is a person, an infinite and wonderful person. He has made man with intelligence, He is therefore a God of intelligence. He has made man with feeling, and He is therefore a God of love and affection. He has made man with a will and the power to act; so He is therefore a God with a will and an infinite power to act. It is simply inconceivable that man, the creature could be as great as the One who created him.

"He that planted the ear, shall He not hear?

He that formed the eye, shall He not see?

It is the last, great sin of rebellious man that he should think that he has no Maker but that he himself is the measure of all things. It is the last, great glory of man to know that he is made in the image of God, and reflects His glory. What a revelation of God this proves to be! What a glory for man it proves to be! Think what it tells us of those we love! As someone once said to his beloved, "Dearest, I have seen in thy face something of the Eternal."

But we also know God through the whole human family that He has brought into being. No one finite man, you see, could reveal much of an infinite God. But God has revealed Himself more fully in the multitude and the variety of men, women, and children that make



up the human race. And incidentally, it is no explanation of the existence of you and me to say that we were born of our parents, and they of their parents, and so on back for many generations. For this succession of generations must have had a beginning, and in the beginning man must have been made by his Creator so that he could multiply and people the earth with his descendents in the generations that followed. The creation of the whole human race in this manner is a miracle far more wonderful than the making of one individual. Any man can make a toy to stand by itself, but only God could make a man to multiply in the family and fill the earth. Yes, and the human family with its trinity of father, mother, and child bound together in the bonds of human love reveals much of the Trinity of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit united in the bonds of Infinite Love. The development of the human family into an almost an infinite variety of individuals, races, classes, and conditions reveals much of the infinite life and varied personality of God Almighty. The presence of a sense of justice and fair play in the human race tells us something of the perfect justice of God. A respect for law and order among humankind tells us something of the perfect law of God. The presence of love and affection and tenderness of God. The unity of the human family tells us something of the unity of God the Father, "Of Whom every family in Heaven and on earth is named."

We also know God through the Holy Scriptures which He has inspired. Of all the families of the earth one race stands out with a unique religious history. In ancient times God dealt with this people, the Hebrew race, in a particular way. He named them His Chosen People and called them to serve Him in a special way. From among this people He chose certain men to become His prophets and to speak His truth in the world. The history of God's dealings with this people, and the message from His prophets, has been preserved in the writings of the Old and New Testaments. This book, the Bible, is unique among books because God has made Himself known

through its writings as He has done in no other book. When we read this Book aright, it speaks to our hearts, or rather God speaks to our hearts, through its words, and convinces us of His truth and His purpose toward us. As someone has said, "We know that the Bible is inspired because it inspires us." Only when God does speak to us, as Spirit with spirit, through the truth of the Bible, do we know that it is the Word of God. It brings us a knowledge of the strange, new world of faith, and hope, and the presence of God, Although this Book was written in many parts, by many men, and across many centuries, it nevertheless has one central theme of the redeeming grace of God and His work of salvation for them that put their trust in Him. This theme has its center and climax in the person of the Redeemer of men, Jesus Christ.

For we know God fully and finally in Jesus Christ His Son. See how we reach this conclusion. We reason from the fact of the created world to the fact of the Creator. We also know that He is the Maker of man, and therefore superior to man in mind, heart, and will. We learn more of His character from the life of the whole human family on the earth. Then we discover, as we might have expected, that God has made Himself known particularly in the history of one Chosen People who were called to be His servants to make Him known in the world. The history of this people reached its consummation in its greatest character, Jesus Christ. But He is acknowledged by men everywhere to be the greatest character of every race. He is the perfect man. He lived the perfect life. But He, acknowledged to be the best of men, with all His humility, made the claim that God was His own Father. He is therefore the Son of God. In Him, therefore, God has made Himself known most fully to man. When we know the Son we know the Father. This is the claim of Jesus. He said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." His words are words of truth, His deeds are deeds of power, His Kingdom is God's Kingdom, His life is the life of God. And see, He gathered up the whole purpose of His life in one final act of self-sacrifice

and redeeming love when He gave Himself on the cross for the sin of the world. There He revealed the perfect love of God. At Calvary God has been made known to us fully and finally.

Think! Dost thou think?

So, the All-great were the all-loving, too;

So, through the thunder comes a human voice, saying,

O heart I made, a heart beats here,

Thou hast no strength, nor mayst conceive of Mine,

But love I gave, with Myself to love,

And thou must love Me, Who died for thee.



# HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

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## HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

You are not born into this world a Christian. You cannot inherit Christianity. You do not earn the Christian life. But you can receive it. It is the gift of God to everyone who will take it. Becoming a Christian is the most important experience that you can ever have. It makes all the difference to you in this world and the next whether you become a Christian or not.

"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

The following steps will direct you into the Christian life.

1. Recognize your condition. You are not a Christian before you accept Christ as your Saviour. But if you are not a Christian you are living in the world for yourself and your own purposes. But this world belongs to God. He is your Maker and He has a purpose for your life. He expects you to love and serve Him above all else. Failure to do this is sin. For sin is something more than crimes like lying, stealing, and killing; it is the attitude of a man's heart when he lives for himself instead of God. It means that you, until you become a Christian are without God and without hope in the world.

"Ye were separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world." (Ephesians 2:12)

2. Believe in Christ. To become a Christian you must have some connection with Jesus Christ. You believe in Him. You believe not only that He lived the good life, taught the truth and proclaimed the Kingdom of God, and that He is the Son of God; but also that He died for you, and rose again. The Christian message begins with the command to "Repent, and Believe;" to believe that Christ took your place when He gave His life upon the cross and became your Saviour. When you believe in Him your sins are forgiven, your life is regenerated, and you begin

to live with God, and by His help. This is the Christian promise of salvation and life everlasting.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

3. Give yourself to God. When you believe that Christ gave His life for you, you will give your life to Him. In giving yourself to Him you trust Him to strengthen, and bless, and guide you into Christian living. He has promised to give life, and strength, and faith, and perseverance, and His Spirit to them that believe in Him.

"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. (II Timothy 1:12)

4. Read your Bible. God has provided certain means by which we can find help and strength and guidance as Christians. One of these is the Bible. It is God's word to you. It tells about God's love and purpose for you. It tells about God's Kingdom and how we should live for Him. It is spiritual food for the soul. You need its nourishment every day in order to grow in strength and knowledge as a Christian. Read it faithfully with the expectation that God will speak to you through its pages.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119:105)

5. Pray every day. Prayer is another means by which we receive help to live as Christians. It is simply speaking with God. It is the attitude of having God for your Companion, and living with Him. It expresses your desire to do His will and to receive His blessing. God knows your heart, and its desires and its needs, and He can answer your prayers and make known His will to you. Pray the first thing in the morning, and the last thing at night, and at any quiet time during the day. Practice the presence of God. Give Him thanks, confess your sins, and seek His guidance.

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16)

6. Attend your Church. Your Church is another God-

appointed means for Christian people to find help, and fellowship, and instruction, and comfort, and hope for the Christian life. It is the duty of every Christian to unite with the Church. When you unite with the Church you give your solemn promise to use diligently these means of grace, which are Bible reading, Prayer, and Church attendance. No one is living as a Christian and doing God's will for him when he willingly neglects these means of grace.

"Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you."  
(James 4:8)

7. Seek the Best. Put out of your life every sin, and unworthy and selfish thing. Shun temptation, and whatever dishonors the name of Christ. Bring into your life whatever is good, noble, and Christ-like. Follow the teachings of Christ. So live, think, and act as if Christ were with you, for He is!

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things." (Philippians 4:8)

8. Expect the Coming of Christ's Kingdom. God is building an eternal and perfect Kingdom through Christ His Son. He is working through all who believe in Him and have become His servants. Some day His Kingdom will be established in triumph, and Christ will reign in righteousness and peace. This is the hope of the Christian life. We do not know when this Kingdom will come in its fullness, but we are told by Christ to watch and to wait for it, for "we know not when the day is."

"Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh." (Matthew 24:42)



# ON THE PASSING OF THE PRESIDENT

*preached by*

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## ON THE PASSING OF THE PRESIDENT

As we meet here today our minds are still under the shadow of the sudden death of our late President. The impact upon the nation has been tremendous. Many words of sorrow and eulogy have been spoken. I would not attempt to add to them. In this hour of worship our thoughts rise higher than the memory of any human being.

But I am reminded of a notable text in the writings of Isaiah the prophet: *In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up.* The ancient king had enjoyed a long and successful reign. He had built up the nation, and warded off its enemies. Then, suddenly, he slipped away and was buried with his fathers. The young prophet was downcast and went into the temple to pray. There a glorious vision broke upon him. *In the year that King Uzziah died he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up.*

So the passing of our late President should lift our eyes from human leadership to the divine. Certainly Mr. Roosevelt was a born leader of men. His long years of leadership in the nation are eloquent proof of that. His influence in politics, government, and among the nations bears tribute to the vast capabilities of the man. People everywhere came to look to him for direction in war and in peace. A New York Times editorial declared that *a hundred years hence men will thank God on their knees that he was President during these years.* But that very statement indicates that there is another Leader, above all human leaders: *One who stands within the shadows, keeping watch o'er his own.* It is He who gives

earth its gifted men and guides the destinies of nations. In the words of our new President it behooves us *to bow in humble submission to His will*. We can say in all sincerity of faith: *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord*. I think that Abraham Lincoln has given the noblest American expression to this faith. I quote him: *The purposes of the Almighty are perfect, and must prevail, though we erring mortals may fail to perceive them accurately in advance. We hoped for a happy termination of this terrible war* (he, of course, was speaking of the Civil War, but how applicable are his words today!). *We hoped for a happy termination of this terrible war long before this: but God knows best, and has ruled otherwise. We shall yet acknowledge His wisdom, and our own error therein. Meanwhile we must work earnestly in the best lights He has given us, trusting that so working still conduces to the great end He ordains*.

The sudden death of our President should also lift our eyes from passing personalities to abiding principles. Now I do not mean to minimize the value and importance of the great leaders of our nation. How rich the American people are because of the dignity of Washington, the brilliance of Hamilton, the humanity of Franklin, the democracy of Jefferson, the fiery dash of Jackson, the magnificent humility of Lincoln, the lofty idealism of Wilson; yes, and the charm, and buoyance, and stoutness of heart of Franklin Roosevelt. He was a great man. But I would not forget, either, that the Republic rests upon laws and not upon individuals. Our national strength lies in the concept of freedom, the ideal of democracy, the principles that stem from the truth of Christianity. It is this foundation of abiding principles

in the United States that has made possible the rise of its great men. Should the people ever come to put their trust in single individuals rather than universal principles of truth and right, then this nation is doomed. The recent significant book, *The Road to Serfdom*, puts it this way: *Nothing distinguishes more clearly a free country from a country under arbitrary government than the observance in the former of the great principles known as the rule of law. As Immanuel Kant put it, "man is free if he needs obey no person but solely the laws."*

The loss of our late Leader should also lift up our eyes from temporal to eternal life. The shock of Mr. Roosevelt's death came partly from the fact that he was presumed to be in the prime of life and strength. He was a man of full, strong life at the head of a nation of full, strong life. It is one of the noblest touches in American history that he was able to overcome a great physical handicap through his abounding vitality. But then, suddenly, in spite of that abounding life he was laid low, and his spirit gone. It brings to mind the lines of Carl Sandburg on the death of President Lincoln at the very height of his Presidential career: *Lincoln was dead. Was there anything more to say? Yes, they would go through the motions of grief and they would take their part in a national funeral and a ceremony of humiliation and abasement and tears. But words were no help. Lincoln was dead. Nothing more than that could be said. He was gone. He would never speak again to the American people. A great friend of man had suddenly vanished, nothing could be done about it. Death is terribly final. But no, Mr. Sandburg, death is not terribly final. There is a life that endures forever. It is the*

Christian life of immortality. The Christian faces the fact of physical death with hope and confidence, and not with the finality of despair. The gift of life everlasting is his nearest and dearest possession. Yes, and the Christian message of life and hope comes out most prominently in times of great sorrow like the present not because it is a religion of death and its finality, but of a final life that triumphs over sorrow and despair.

I would also say that the death of our President should lift our eyes beyond military victory of war to the Christian victory of life. Is it not remarkable that the Presidents who led us through the Civil War and this World War both died suddenly in the very hour of victory? Is it not significant that the elation that military victory brings will be tempered by the sorrow that this death has brought? In the glad hour of relief and joyous celebration it should keep men from forgetting that the battle of life still goes on, and the enemies of a man's soul still beset him on his way. For the battle against sin, and evil, and greed, and pride and all man's enemies still rages relentlessly. *And the last enemy that shall be overcome is death.* No victory in war can hide that fact, and now it has been brought home to us so forcefully in the death of the Commander-in-Chief of the country. Our real hope is fixed not upon a victory over the Axis nations, but over Satan and all his forces. We follow a Leader, *Eternal, Immortal*; One who lived, and died, and rose again that *He might bring life and immortality to light in the Gospel.* This faith in the Christian victory of evil and death is expressed in the poem which Wood-

row Wilson described as his favorite:

*In the hour of death, after this life's whim,  
When the heart beats low and the eyes grow  
dim,  
And pain has exhausted every limb,  
The lover of the Lord shall trust in him.*

*When the will has forgotten the lifelong aim,  
And the mind can only disgrace its fame,  
And a man is uncertain of his own name,  
The power of the Lord shall fill his frame.*

*When the last sigh is heaved, and the last tear is  
shed,  
And the coffin is waiting beside the bed,  
And the widow and child forsake the dead—  
The Angel of the Lord shall lift up his head.*

*For even the purest delight may pall,  
And power must fail and pride must fall,  
And the love of the dearest friends grow small—  
But the glory of the Lord is all in all.*

And finally, I would also venture to suggest that the passing of our late President should lift our eyes from a world organization of nations to the coming of the Kingdom of God. Since the day in Nineteen Forty that the Atlantic Charter was first announced human hopes for a new and different world of peace have eagerly followed the international Conference at Moscow, Cairo, Teheran, Yalta, and, next, San Francisco. Mr. Roosevelt was a leading light in this movement for a new world order, and many people have come to place unbounded confidence in his negotiations with the Prime Minister of England, and

the dictator of Russia. One preacher, God forgive him, speaking of the first of these conferences at Moscow, said: *Eternal peace may flow from Moscow. But Eternal Peace does Not flow from Moscow.* And the Christian hope of a new order in the Kingdom of God does not rest upon mortal men like Roosevelt, Nineteenth Century Tories like Churchhill, and ruthless dictators like Stalin. Our hope rests in the Gospel of redeeming grace, and repentance, and regeneration, and the coming of the Kingdom of God through Jesus Christ. It is only when men accept His Gospel and live lives that are changed, and men are drawn together in faith toward God and love toward man in Him, that they can see, and enter, and understand, and serve, and advance the coming of that Kingdom of righteousness and peace. God grant that our hearts may be stayed upon this truth in these days of trouble and tragedy.

THE EAST HAMPTON STAR



# LIVING ON BORROWED TIME

*preached by*

REV. FRANCIS KINSLER

Sunday Morning, March 31, 1946



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## LIVING ON BORROWED TIME

One day long ago a tower fell in Siloam at Jerusalem and killed eighteen men. Some people reported the news to Jesus right away. I wonder what they expected Him to say? Did they expect Him to apologize for the improvidence of God in allowing such an accident to happen? Did they expect Him to speak against what might have been the criminal neglect of the builders that caused the accident? Or did they expect Him to point out some guilty wickedness in the men who were killed? Whatever they expected, they didn't expect the answer they got. Jesus said: *Those eighteen men, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, think ye that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay, but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

Now if Jesus were here today, teaching in our streets, I think He would use another illustration to point out the same truth that He taught in the days when the Tower in Siloam fell. He would say, *Think you that those one hundred thousand men, and women, and children—or was it two hundred thousand, or three hundred thousand?—upon whom the bomb fell, at Hiroshima, and killed them: Think ye that they were offenders above all the people that dwell in the world? I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* These words of Jesus are somewhat unexpected, are they not? But what do they mean? They mean just this: *The unrepentant are always living on borrowed time.*

Jesus gave a Lesson from Nature to explain

it. He said: *A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit thereon, and found none. And he said unto the vine-dresser: Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: Cut it down. Why doth it yet cumber the ground? And he answering saith unto Him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and fertilize it: And if it bear fruit thenceforth, well: but if not, thou shalt cut it down.* This little fig tree had been carefully planted, and faithfully tended; it had been fertilized and cultivated, and now, after three years, the owner had every right to expect fruit from it, but he found none. He did what any farmer would do: he ordered it cut down. Why should it waste the ground any longer? If you have a fruit tree that doesn't bear fruit, you cut it down. If you have a vegetable garden that doesn't yield produce, you plough it under. If you have a hen that doesn't lay eggs, you "make it lay in the pot." But in this case the gardener said: *Let it be this year also: Give it one more chance, and if it bear fruit, well: But if not, thou shalt cut it down.* This little fig tree was now living on borrowed time!

The modern mind has much to learn from this Lesson of Nature. In these days we love to talk about the slow growth, the long development, and the gradual evolution of the human race. If anyone should lament the sad state of affairs in the world today he would get this answer: *Do not expect too much. The development of civilization is a slow and gradual process. It will take centuries and centuries for man to get better, and for Christianity to change our ways.* What tommyrot! And what a miserable excuse! Why, there was better Christianity in the First Cen-

tury than there is today. Much of modern civilization has developed into something more brutal and ruthless and savage than anything heard of before. This is like the slow and gradual progress of the frog who jumped up one foot and fell back two in trying to get out of the well. Modern civilization with its boasted achievements and vast opportunities has had far more time to bear the fruits of repentance and righteousness than that little fig tree was given to yield its fruit: it is now living on borrowed time.

This is also the Lesson of History. Jesus was speaking at the time to the people of Jerusalem. They were certainly expected to bring forth the fruits of righteousness in the Kingdom of God! They had enjoyed many privileges in the long course of their history. They had enjoyed the blessings of Israel, the covenant of Abraham, the revelations of God: they were the nation of the prophets, the priests, and the kings anointed by the Lord. This was Jerusalem the Golden, the city of the temple, the sacrifices, the visions and all the hallowed institutions of religion. It was the City of the Great King. And the King came, seeking the fruits of all this wonderful heritage and privilege. But what did he find? He found a City of priests that were proud, and Pharisees that were self-righteous, and people that were self-centered: a city that had no room for Jesus and His Gospel of God's redeeming love for the lost. So one morning as Jesus was coming to the City on His last visit he spied a fig tree full of leaves in the distance, and being hungry He came seeking figs, but found none. So he cursed the tree, and it withered away. What a picture of the beautiful city full of tradition, and privilege, and ceremony, and even religion, and

barren of fruit! Later we see Him going slowly on His way, mounting the slopes of Olivet, rounding the shoulder of the hill, suddenly catching sight of the walls and the battlements, the house-tops and towers of the golden city, gleaming in the sunlight. There He sits down, and weeps, and cries: *O Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen her brood, and ye would not! Henceforth is your house left to you desolate!* And after that they took Him, in that city, and slew Him on a cross. But within a generation the legions of Rome marched into the Holy Land, encircled the Holy City, and after a bitter siege, razed it to the ground: a tragic fulfillment of Jesus' word to the men of Jerusalem: *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

This Lesson of History is one that repeats itself. In contemporary Europe there flourished the latest and greatest of civilizations. We called it 'a Christian civilization.' It had inherited the glory of Greece, the law of Rome, the religion of Israel, the faith of Christianity, from which sprang modern culture, enlightenment, and democracy. But in our time we have witnessed the spectacle of whole nations becoming barren of the fruits of Christianity and turning away from their rich inheritance until suddenly, the tree has been cut down, the civilization has crashed, and multitudes have perished. Methinks I hear the voice of Jesus saying again: *Think ye that these people were offenders above all that dwell in the earth? Nay, but I tell you, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

This is also, believe it or not, the Lesson of Modern Science. Yes, a strange thing has happened: the scientists are now repeating the words that Jesus spoke so long ago. There was a time,

you know, when many scientists were talking of nothing but evolution and human progress and saying that modern scientific knowledge and skill enabled man to take care of himself, his problems, and his future very well; some of them even drawing the inference that God and personal faith were really of no further use! But scientists are not talking that way today. They are talking with as much alarm and urgency as any preacher ever talked. What has happened to their idea of human progress and growth? Let me tell you a little story. Once upon a time a man invented a bow and arrow and used it for his own advantage against other men. And once upon another time another man invented gun powder and used it for his own advantage against other men. And once upon another time other men invented the machine gun, the bombing plane, and the exploding rocket and used them for their own advantage against other men. And once upon another time a whole lot of men invented the atomic bomb, and used it! Yes, modern man has been using his scientific knowledge and skill, his industrial know-how, and all the rich inheritance of his civilization for his own advantage, and now, suddenly, unexpectedly, we have come to the showdown and the pay-off. Man now has enough scientific power to blow himself off the face of the earth. Scientists today are saying that unless man changes his ways he will literally destroy civilized life from off the earth. Yes, unless man changes his ways and devotes his time, his interest, his wealth, his power, his scientific knowledge and skill to nothing less than the glory of God and the advancement of His Kingdom his days are numbered. This is the lesson that has come to us in the awful blast of the bomb that fell on Hiroshima. Through what happened there



Christ is saying to the world: *Think you that those people were offenders above all who dwell in the world? Nay, I tell you, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* An unrepentant world today is living on borrowed time. The little fig tree was given one more year. Arthur Compton, one of the atomic scientists, says that we have until nineteen fifty-six to change our ways!

Yes, this is the Lesson for your life and mine. In our land we have been blessed above all nations in our inheritance, our wealth, our opportunities, and our knowledge of Christian truth, and in our endless means for living lives of personal ease, and comfort, and enjoyment, even in a world where millions are starving for a little bit of food. Think what the people of this nation might be doing for the glory of God and the advancement of His Kingdom! But while many American politicians are repeating that we must consider our own interests, and security, and material prosperity first and foremost, and while many more American people are living that way, does not the Great Gardener, Who planted this wonderful garden, have every right to come seeking fruit herein?

And we who live in East Hampton, do we not find ourselves planted in a lovely garden, surrounded by every beauty, and comfort, and privilege, and opportunity? Are we simply setting ourselves to enjoy these things for ourselves and get as much comfort, and pleasure, and enjoyment out of life as we possibly can? Or are we setting ourselves to devote our all for the glory of God and the Advancement of His Kingdom?

And what of us who bear the name of Christ? Certainly He calls us, and blesses us, and inspires us to bring forth the fruits of repentance, and

faith, and Christian living. Listen to what He said: *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman: Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, He taketh it away.* . . Yes, this is the great lesson of nature, and experience, and science, and of our own Christian faith. Either we are giving ourselves whole-heartedly to His calling and service, or *We are living on borrowed time.*



# YOUR CHURCH PROMISE

*preached by*

REV. FRANCIS KINSLER

Sunday Morning, June 9, 1946



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*of the*

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East Hampton, N. Y.

## YOUR CHURCH PROMISE

In his book *How to Think About Christ*, Dr. William Adams Brown says that many people still believe in Christ today who have lost faith in the Church. Just this week a man told me that he "believed in religion", but that he did not like the Church and its rules. A recent newspaper reports the suicide of a man who left a note saying, "There is no one who admires Jesus Christ more than I do, but the conventional, contemporary method of worshipping Him gives me a pain in the neck."

Now we might question the sincerity of people who claim to admire the religion of Jesus Christ but who despise the worship of Him in His Church by His people according to His commandment—for that is the Christian religion. But we might better reexamine the promise of people who enter the Church to put their faith in Christ and serve Him in the Church—for when that promise is fulfilled the Church becomes identified with Jesus Christ and expresses His life, and mind, and will, and purpose.

When anyone unites with an organization he promises to abide by its rules and by-laws. When

a soldier enters the army he makes a pledge of loyalty and obedience. When a person seeks citizenship in a country like the United States he swears to uphold the constitution and obey the laws. And when we enter the Church of Jesus Christ we make certain very definite and binding promises.

When we unite with the Church we promise first of all to accept Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Saviour. This question is put to everyone entering the Church: *Do you here, in the presence of God and this congregation, confess Christ as your Lord, and adhere to that Christian faith wherein you were baptised?* Now many, many people in the world answer this question in the negative. Others acknowledge Him as a good teacher, a great reformer, or a noble martyr, but they do not accept Him as Lord. But the Christian does. He answers this question with a plain and unequivocal "I do." Yes, when anyone unites with the Christian Church, whether it be the Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopalian, Baptist, or any other branch of the Church Universal, he promises to accept Jesus Christ as His Lord and Saviour.

In this Church promise we accept Him as Saviour. We put our trust in Him as *The One Who came into the world to save sinners*. He put it this way Himself: "The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." The New Testament sums up the Gospel in these familiar and beautiful words: *God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.* The Christian

accepts this statement of the Gospel of Christ the Saviour. We believe that He is more than a good teacher, a great reformer, a noble martyr. We believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God; true man and true God. We believe that He not only lived a perfect life, but that He also died a sacrificial death, as *The lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world*. We believe that He died, and rose again that we might live in Him and receive the forgiveness of sins, the gift of eternal life, and the promise of fellowship with God both now and forever.

In this Church promise we also accept Him as Lord. We believe that if He is our Saviour, He is also our Lord and Master, too. When we discover the love of Christ, Who He is, and how He delivers us from evil and brings us into His eternal Kingdom we dedicate our hearts and lives to Him in deep gratitude, as we sing:

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my life, my soul, my all.*

So commit our lives to Him. We acknowledge His right to rule our lives, and our duty to seek His will, follow His example, and keep His commandments. In creed, in song, in prayer, and in doctrine we acclaim Him as the Christ of God, the Head of the Church, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, the One Who said, *All power is given unto Me in Heaven and on earth*; and so when we enter His Church we promise to accept Him as our Lord and Master. We fulfill this promise by keeping His commandments. In fact the second promise we make when we are formally united with the Church is this: *Do you promise with God's help to serve the Lord, and keep*

*His commandments all the days of your life?* and we answer, *I do.* We know the commandments: *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God. . Thou shalt have no other Gods before Me. . Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. . Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. .* do we keep Christ's commandment here? We promised to! *Thou shalt not steal. . Thou shalt not covet. .* and so on. These commandments are taken up by Christ and amplified, clarified, and applied to every department of our lives in His Sermon on the Mount and His other teachings; and we solemnly promise, with His help, to keep these commandments all the days of our lives because He is our Lord and Saviour.

And when we unite with the Church we also promise to apply the Means of Grace to our personal lives. The question is put thus: *Do you promise to make diligent use of the means of grace,* and every Church member gives the solemn answer, "I do." This phrase, *The Means of Grace* denotes the ways by which we get help, and strength, and inspiration, and guidance to live the Christian Life. We begin the Christian Life when we definitely accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, and receive a new, spiritual life in Him, but this new Christian Life must grow, and develop, and become strong, and intelligent, and fruitful in right living and serving, and God Almighty has provided certain ways and means by which this can be done, which we call the means of grace. Every Church member promises to *make diligent use of these means of grace;* and when they are neglected anybody's Christian experience grows weak, and distorted, and even perverted and dead.

Let me say in passing that the Means of

Grace are a means, and not the whole end and aim of the Christian Life. It is not the purpose of the Christian Church simply to draw large congregations, to build strong organizations, to establish ecclesiastical regulations for the sake of doing these things. It is the purpose of the Church to establish the Christian Faith in the hearts and lives of men, women, and children through the means of grace so that they may become strong, intelligent, faithful Christian people in their personal lives at home, in school, at work, in the community, in the nation, and in the world in preparation for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

(I never heard of people becoming such all-out Christians without making diligent use of the means of grace.)

Now the Means of Grace are chiefly three: Church attendance, Bible reading, and the exercise of prayer. When a person unites with the Church he gives his definite promise to be diligent in these things, and the word diligent means faithful, regular, and devoted. Take the worship of God in the services of the Church: it is a primary privilege and duty of every Christian on the first day of every week. Herein is fulfilled the highest duty of man to God, to fulfill the command *to worship the Lord our God, and serve Him only*. In this hour of worship we wait upon God, render Him glad praise and thanksgiving, confess our human sin and need; seek and find His forgiveness; rejoice in the experience of His presence; feel the influence of His Spirit, attend the reading of His Word, and receive the message of the Gospel; and here we unite with other Christian people in fellowship and service in the cause of Christ around the world.

When we unite with the Church we also promise to acknowledge the Authority of the Church over our personal lives. This question is put to all entering the Church: *Do you promise to submit yourself to the lawful authority and guidance of the Church?* The answer we give is "I do."

Now the Authority of the Church rests solely upon the authority of Christ. It is purely moral and spiritual and is grounded in the word of Christ and His commandments. We already noted that every Church member has given his promise to keep the commandments of the Lord all his days. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church with its Confession of Faith, its Longer and Shorter Catechisms, its Form of Government, its Book of Discipline, and its Directory of Worship, is based upon the Word of God and seeks to express the will of Christ. We submit to the lawful authority of the Church because we acknowledge the authority of Christ over our lives.

This Authority of the Church does not contravene the principle of the freedom of the conscience. We believe in the freedom of the conscience and the power of every man to choose his own personal beliefs but for this very reason and according to this principle Christians have the right and duty to band together in the Church of Jesus Christ and to include in their fellowship only those people who confess a similar faith in Jesus Christ and who promise to obey His commandments and to accept the authority of His Church. According to the principle of the freedom of conscience a person is free to enter or not to enter the Christian Church; but freedom of conscience never, never means that anyone has



the right to make solemn promises of faith and obedience to Jesus Christ and then to fail or refuse to keep those promises. Every member of the Church has solemnly bound himself before God and man to put his faith in Christ and keep His commandments all his days.

Now the Authority of the Church is administered in different churches in different ways: through the pope, or bishop, or hierarchy, or even through the local congregation alone; but the authority of the Presbyterian Church is administered through the elected representatives of the congregation consisting of the pastor and the ruling elders in the Church Session. This representative form of Church government best accords, we believe, with the New Testament principles of Church government and resembles the political structure of the Republic of the United States of America. The Church officers, acting through the Church Session, solemnly promise to uphold the Word of God and the commandments of Christ, the morality and discipline of the Church, and to seek its purity and welfare in all humility, love, and firmness. This duty and privilege of these Church officers rests finally upon the word of Christ Himself. He said: *I will give you the keys of the kingdom; and whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.* The officers of this Church exercise the spiritual authority of the Church for the sole purpose of bringing home to men everywhere the absolute necessity of repentance and faith toward Jesus Christ for eternal salvation, and our duty to make Him the Lord and Master of our lives by keeping His commandments with His help.

East Hampton Star



# GETTING UP AND LIVING

*preached by*

REV. FRANCIS KINSLER

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## GETTING UP AND LIVING

You have undoubtedly become aware of the new treatment for patients who have undergone an operation. It is described in a recent magazine article entitled *They Get Up and Live*. It tells how people recover rapidly and safely from an operation if, instead of lying in bed for days, they get up almost right away and begin to perform all the usual functions of human life. They suffer much less from weakness, nausea, pain; they eat and sleep well, they return to their jobs in half the calculated time; and what is most significant, the danger of their wound reopening is greatly reduced. This new treatment is called *early ambulation*.

Now this article *They Get Up and Live* takes us right back to the Gospel Story. There we see the Great Physician performing miracles of healing upon the souls and bodies of people. He operates upon the whole human personality to remove what is mean, and sick, and ugly, and spiritually dead, and to restore the patient to a wonderful new experience of life. This is the glory of the Gospel Story: the purity, the power, and the love of Jesus Christ come into the lives of human beings with His healing touch, and *They Get Up and Live*.

But alas, there are many, many people who

do not respond to His treatment. They know something of the power of the Great Physician to heal, but they do not recover from their spiritual sickness either quickly, or completely; and sometimes, not at all. I have some people like that on my list of patients right now! But what is the trouble? The patient has continued to lie in bed spiritually after the operation. He remains sick, with pain and nausea; needless to say he does not get back to his job; and the danger of his wound reopening, if it has not already done so, is very, very real. This person knows something of the healing power of the Great Physician, but he has not followed the right treatment of *early ambulation*. He has failed to *Get Up and Live*.

This morning I want to go with you into the Gospel Clinic of the Great Physician and see how the treatment of *early ambulation* works in the lives of people *Who Get Up and Live*.

Here is the Case of the Impotent Man at the Pool of Bethesda. He was certainly sick in body, mind, and soul. For thirty-eight years he had grown sick of heart and given up hope of a cure. Then one day Jesus came into his life. The Great Physician diagnosed his case immediately with the penetrating question: *Wouldst thou be made whole?* That's the doctor's first concern: does the patient want to get well? If not, there's no hope. But if he wants to get well—and what person with a spark of decency, manhood, and self-respect left in him does not want to get well? Then the Great Physician will exercise His power. So Christ said to the man: *Arise, take up thy bed, and walk!*

That was the crucial moment in the case-history of the Man at the Pool of Bethesda. If he

did not get up and walk he would have remained in his weakness, misery, and pain in that wretched place of the lame, the halt, the blind, and the withered all the rest of his days—and forever. But look! The man *Took up his bed and walked*. That made all the difference in his convalescence. He got up right away and did the right thing. Now see: Jesus "*Found him in the Temple, and said unto him: behold, thou art made whole: go, sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee*. Yes, this man must follow the treatment of *early ambulation* or his sickness would overtake him again, his wound reopen, and his last state become worse than his first.

But the patient got up, and walked, and found his way into the Temple of God. Every patient who feels the touch of Christ's healing power and wants to follow the right treatment will find his way into the House of God. How else can he pay the debt of infinite gratitude for his divine healing? How else can he follow the instructions of the Great Physician? How else can he rightly exercise his new strength, and God-given life? How else can he get the right food and nourishment to complete his spiritual convalescence? How else can he get to his job of living right and serving the God of his Salvation? How else can he support the work of the Great Physician for the healing of the nations? How else can he avoid the danger of falling back into his bed of spiritual weakness, nausea, and misery? How else can he escape the horrible possibility of his wound reopening until his last state becomes worse than his first?

Now take the Case of the Prodigal Son. This patient had started out well in life, as youth usually does. He had enough health to defy the doc-

tor, and enough wealth to desert his father. But when he found himself in the far-away land of pride, and pleasure, and self-will he soon caught the prevailing sickness of that land, for it is very contagious, and he began to grow faint, and to be in want, and sick at heart. Thereupon he remembered the Great Physician, and he said to himself: "*I will arise, and go to my father, and I will say to him, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight.*"

That was the turning-point in his case. He recognized his sickness, he acknowledged the power of the Great Physician, and he remembered the loving care of his Father's house, and so he said: "*I will arise.*" But had it ended there, as it so often does, there had been no cure. Diagnosis of the disease never brings deliverance to the patient. Anxious longing for a better condition, distant acknowledgment of the Great Physician, noble sentiment about the Father's House is not enough: the Prodigal Son must arise, and come to his father's house—he must get up and live! So the Prodigal arose, and came, and when he was still afar off, for his pace was weak and slow, his Father saw him, and ran, and kissed him—and that was the healing touch. Now the patient could lift up his head, and wear the new robe, and put on the new shoes, and wear the fine ring, and sit down at his father's banquet-table with the hearty appetite of one who is getting well!

Many patients are like the Prodigal Son in one way or another. Maybe they started life bravely, with both health and wealth, but before they know it they find themselves in the never, never land of pride, and pleasure, and self-will, and they grow weak, and lonely, and sick of heart. They may even say to themselves: "*I will*

arise, and go to my father's house, and say, *I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight.*" but if that is your case, you must do more: you must follow the right treatment, and arise, and come to your Father; for only then will you know the healing power of the Great Physician.

Now take the Case of Zacchaeus. He was a very sick man morally. He was suffering with the cancer of greed, and I guess he knew it. He had lost his self-respect and the respect of his fellow-citizens at the price of making money at their expense. Then came the Great Physician into his neighborhood one day. Zacchaeus heard of his coming with a certain vague stirring within him. He ran down the road to see him, and because he was short, he climbed up into a tree. Now watch the skillful handling of his case by the Great Physician. Jesus stood below, and said: "*Zacchaeus, come down: this night I must lodge in thy house.*" Yes, this Physician is ready to spend whole nights with his patients to heal them. That night Christ cut out the cancer of his love of money and cured him completely. Now watch Zacchaeus stand up before Jesus and say: "*Sir, the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I have defrauded anyone I will repay him four-fold.*" Zacchaeus followed the right method of *early ambulation* in a financial way. He did not hide the cancer of his greed; he let Jesus cut it out with the radium-like power of his love, and the sharp, cutting-power of His truth, and then he got up out of his sickbed, and lived! The Great Physician pronounced the verdict of complete recovery then and there: "*Today is Salvation come to this house.*"

Beloved, is your case by any chance like that of Zacchaeus? You have met the Great Physician,

I trust, and have heard His clear instructions for the cure of this disease: "*Go, sell, give, and come, follow me, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven. Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven.*" There is no other cure for this cancer of the love of money, for *you cannot serve God and Mammon.* Do you spend all that you want on yourself and your family and measure your regard for the eternal Kingdom of God in terms of nickels, and dimes, and quarters, and one dollar bills? Then I say, it is time for an operation, and time for getting up and living, and entering into the fellowship of the Master, and learning what He means when he says, "*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*"

Now take the Case of Peter. That poor man suffered from a certain frailty of the flesh, and stammering of speech. It showed up at embarrassing moments. There was that time in the boat when the Great Physician suddenly showed His power, and Peter cried out: "*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.*" There was that other time when Jesus was telling His friends how much His career as a Great Physician would cost Him in blood, and Peter interrupted to say, "*Far be it, Lord.*" And then that worst time of all, when Peter grew very faint and lost all his stomach and nerve and tongue and broke out with cursing and swearing that he didn't know the Physician at all. But Jesus had His healing touch for Peter, too; and He applied it from time to time. The first time Peter responded well, and said, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.*" The next time the treatment was harder to take, for Peter had fallen down badly; so Jesus said, "*Simon Peter, lovest thou Me? Feed my*



sheep." Peter had to take that medicine three times, for he had failed three times, and he didn't like the taste of it altogether. But it made him well, for he followed it through with *early ambulation*. See him now, almost right away afterwards, standing up strong and firm on the streets of Jerusalem and proclaiming to the crowds that Jesus, *whom they crucified*, was both *Lord and Christ*. From that day forth Peter arose, and went about preaching everywhere, winning converts, feeding the sheep, and establishing the Church of Jesus Christ. In that activity of early ambulation he grew strong in heart and voice and soul.

I know lots of people like Peter, frail in the flesh and stammering of tongue. They need to follow the example of Peter and use their voices in the exercise of saying that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Lord and Master of their lives*. They should get up and express in a thousand different ways their love and loyalty to Jesus Christ and His eternal truth. We need more such exercise in our community and in our own Church: we need more people to speak the truth, and feed the sheep, and profess the Gospel, we need them in our Sunday School, in our Young People's groups, in our Women's Association; in our Men's Brotherhood. If there are willing patients here today I wish they would see me for further instructions!



FALLING HOUSE  
*or*  
FIRM FOUNDATION

*preached by*

REV. FRANCIS KINSLER

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East Hampton, N. Y.

## FALLING HOUSE *or* FIRM FOUNDATION

Jesus' great Sermon on the Mount, the proclamation of His Kingdom, closes with a dramatic picture. *He that heareth these words of mine, He said, and doeth them not, shall be likened to a foolish man that built his house upon the sand, and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof.* This picture has been called a brilliant conclusion to a great speech. It is also a startling prophecy of what has happened in our time. If I had to give a name to what has happened in our time I would call it *The Fall of the House of Man.*

*Well, now, someone may object, We've not seen any falling houses. We still have our homes, our stores, our schools, our banks, and our churches. Our country is like a big house of mighty strength and it stands firm. We won't be bothered by this talk of a falling house.*

Maybe not! But many a citizen of the world today has been more than bothered by the fact of a Falling House. How many people in Europe and Asia today find themselves living within the crumbling and roofless walls of some bombed-out building; or cooking a few frozen potatoes over a little fire made from their chopped up furniture to keep body and soul together amidst the debris and ruins of what was once somebody's comfortable house! Twenty-five thousand people are still sleeping in the subways of Tokyo because

their homes have been razed to the ground. Thousands and thousands of displaced persons are held in miserable camps this winter, or driven cruelly from place to place who will never again see their native land or sit about their own fireside with their loved ones about them. In the Occupied Countries alone some six million people were driven from their homes, and millions more in Russia, and yet more millions in China. And is it twenty, or thirty, or forty, or fifty million men, women, and children who were left dead, wounded, or missing after the awful storm of the late war had passed? Yes, Jesus' picture of the Falling House has been multiplied and magnified many-fold before our eyes today.

And many a city of today is like the house that fell. A friend of mine who recently visited the city of Bremen in Germany said that he would not try to describe the ruin and desolation there because I would not believe it. As we sit here in the quiet of East Hampton it would stagger our imagination to picture the appalling, ghost-like ruins of once mighty, throbbing cities of our modern world. The very names of cities conjure up lurid pictures of crashing catastrophe: Warsaw, Rotterdam, Dunkirk, London, Coventry, Nanking, Kiev, Rostov, Sevastopol, Stalingrad, Hamburg, Nurnberg, Munich, Berlin, Kobe, Osaka, Tokyo, Hiroshima, Nagasaki. Somebody has said that the teeming, dynamic city of today, with its skyscraping buildings, is the chief symbol of modernity; the modernity of yesterday, yes; but the chief symbol of the modernity of today is the city that fell!

And many a country today is like the house that fell. Poland had only recently emerged to national independence, and patriotic pride and ambition when, in two weeks of crashing bombs, she fell to the ground. So Holland fell amidst her broken dykes, and Belgium was engulfed, with her king trapped, by the inrush of the enemy, and then came the Fall of France! Why France had been the quintessence of all that is debonaire, sophisticated, modern, humanitarian; but in the storm that broke upon her she fell like a house of cards. The superstructure was gaudy, but the foundation was rotten. Marshal Petain, and he ought to know, explained the Fall of France by his famous statement on the moral decline of his nation, its neglect of Christian worship, and Sabbath observance, and the prevailing spirit of everyone for himself. Then there was the fall of the Balkan states; and then came the shameful prostration of Italy, the fall of Germany as its fuehrer killed himself amidst the falling, flaming ruins of his chancellory, followed by the crash of the once proud house of Imperial Japan. This is the story of many a country in our time: *When the rains (of bullets and bombs) descended, and the floods (of fear and hate and ambition) came, and the winds (of lying propaganda and false ideologies) blew, it beat upon the house and it fell, and great was the fall thereof.*

Even the civilization of our time is like the house in Jesus' story. Believe me, the calamity of our time is more than the falling of some buildings. It would be a sad mistake to suppose that some citizens, and cities, and countries have fallen just because they chanced to be at the wrong end of an exploding shell, or falling bomb, or advancing army. Behind the tragic fall of these things

we can detect the passing of an era, the fall of a whole civilization. This civilization began building, you know, about three or four hundred years ago in Europe when man removed himself from the foundations of his former faith, and went his own way to build his own modern house upon the foundation of material progress, and scientific skill, and military might, and national pride, and human self-sufficiency. We might quote man after man on this point. Listen to Alfred Noyes: *We must look deeper than the political catastrophes of the modern world, deeper than the disasters that exist side by side, if we would find the real cause of the contemporary tragedy. The cause of this tragedy is neither political nor economic: it is that the (human) race has been induced to forget its true end through which happiness alone can come.* Also the words of Walter Lippman, writing on *The Forgotten Foundation: The liberties we talk of today were established by men who took their conception of man from the great central religious traditions of western civilization, and the liberties (and the civilization) we inherit can almost certainly not survive the abandonment of that tradition.* Well, Jesus said all this very plainly long ago, when He said, *He that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened to a foolish man that built his house upon the sand, and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof.*

But Jesus also spoke the other side of this truth. He said, *He that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened to a wise*

man who built his house upon the rock, and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded on the rock. That confronts us with a choice. We can either build on our own independent way of life, or we can build upon the eternal rock of Jesus Christ and His unchanging truth. We can either say what H. G. Wells' croquet player said: *I don't care. The world may be going to pieces. The stone age may be returning. This may, as you say, be the sunset of civilization. I'm sorry, but I can't help it this morning. I have other engagements. I'm going to play croquet with my aunt at half past twelve o'clock.* Or, we may look to the Word of Jesus Christ, and find a firm foundation for time and for eternity.

We can make the Word of Christ the Foundation of our Religious Life. Human life and society do not rest on any foundation of earth or brick and mortar, or flesh and blood, or industrial organization, or political scheme—these things are the visible superstructure or life—the foundation lies deeper, hidden in the heart of man, in the secret principles, and purposes, and ideals that he cherishes in his inmost soul. The religious convictions of mankind lie at the base of all customs, and traditions and standards; and the Christian is one who is called to build all his habits, and plans, and activities upon the Truth of Christ, or else his religious profession will rest upon the sand, and prove to be no foundation at all in the day of storm. Oh, I know that we have many churches today, and their finances and their statistics are good; and that there are more names on membership rolls than ever before in history, and there

are worldly wise people who say *We are all Christians* but, you see, it is not a question of *how big and pretentious the house is, but how firm a foundation?* Jesus Himself said right before the end of His sermon on the mount: *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father Who is in Heaven.* This is the One Foundation: Jesus Christ our Lord, His Life, His atoning Death, His resurrection and revelation of God the Father, and His insistent, challenging command to *Seek first His Kingdom and His Righteousness.*

We can also make the Word of Christ the Foundation of our Home life. The family, we are told so often, is the foundation of our community, our country, our civilization, but the home in turn, must have its foundation. Let no one think that today we in America are any longer building the house of our home life upon a solid foundation. The House is already falling down when two out of three marriages end in divorce, and the rate of divorces is on the increase, and in some counties of the United States last year more divorces were issued, than marriages licensed. How could the right foundation be established when the Sunday movies, with much that they stand for, take the place of the House of God in family after family! Many movie actors have certainly failed miserably to establish their family life on any enduring foundation. Yes, the house of the American family is falling, and the only way that it can be established again is to build upon the foundation of Jesus Christ in the family of God the Father. Only when faithfulness to Him, and



family devotions, and Bible reading and prayer, and an honest effort to follow His commandments is restored in the home, can the home stand.

We can also make the Word of Christ the Foundation of our Personal Lives. He certainly intended us to. You remember the time Jesus said to the disciples, *Who do men say that I am?* and Peter gave his glad personal confession, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* And Jesus immediately pointed out that this confession was the Rock-foundation upon which He would build His Church, and establish His kingdom in the hearts of men, saying: *Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.* So we are making our choice day by day, and building the house of our lives week by week. Either we are building by thought, word, and deed, and inmost conviction upon the one foundation that is Jesus Christ; or else we are building upon the sands of time. God grant that we be like the *wise man that built his house upon the rock, and when the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon the house, it fell not, for it was founded upon the rock.*



COMMUNISM  
*versus*  
CHRISTIANITY

*preached by*

REV. FRANCIS KINSLER

Sunday Morning, March 16, 1947



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## COMMUNISM VERSUS CHRISTIANITY

The rise of Communism is the most astonishing fact of our time. Forty years ago it was only the crack-pot scheme of a few revolutionists who spent half their time in hiding, and the other half in prison. Today Communism is an economic system established over one fifth of the land surface of the earth, and infiltrating into the rest of the world. It is a political power in the Soviet Union which has subdued many peoples, and challenges the whole family of nations. It is also a philosophy of life that threatens the cherished beliefs of the whole world of Christendom. I therefore wish to speak on *Communism versus Christianity*. What is the relation between these two forces struggling for the souls of men today?

In the first place and historically *Communism is a stinging rebuke to Christianity*. Russia was once a mighty bastion of the Christian Church. Moscow was known as the Third Rome. The Greek Orthodox Church held sway over the Russian people for a thousand years since the time of the grandduke Vladimar. One Church Historian writes: *Christianity penetrated into the life of the people (of Russia) deeper than any other country without, however, bringing about a corresponding thorough moral transformation*. The organized Church grew strong in power and prestige and pomp and pageantry and priests and patriarchs in that land. But the Gospel of the Love of Christ, instead of being poured out in devotion upon the people in their ignorance and need and sin, became more and more frozen in the deadly

ritual of its services. The Russian Church became hopelessly aligned with the Czarist regime and the reactionary nobility and far removed from the life of the people. It became an instrument for preserving the vested interest of the few, instead of an instrument for distributing the Bread of Life to the many. So the Russian people were left spiritually starved, bewildered, lost. Their sad plight toward the end of the last Century is vividly described in the Russian novel of Dostoevsky called 'The Possessed.' Every character in this book, hero and heroine, noble and ignoble, learned and unlearned, is living a life that is aimless and abnormal, inane and insane—they are all *possessed*, without any noble faith to redeem them. Finally the pompous old scholar in the novel runs away from his apartment and his patroness, catches pneumonia, and on his deathbed calls for a New Testament. He reads the story of Jesus casting out the demons from the Gaderenes and sending them away into the swine that rush down the cliff into the sea. It is a story of the Russian people driven by a thousand conflicting passions and purposes that make their lives miserable with sin because they have not been possessed by the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The Church of Russia had enjoyed the opportunity of a thousand years in which to make Christ real in the life of the nation and it failed in its high and holy duty.

Judgment fell in the year 1917. Then the Czarist regime collapsed, and with it the power and prestige of the established Church. But the Communists did not come into power immediately; they were not ready for it. Even when the Kerensky government fell because it was powerless to handle the howling mobs on the streets

of St. Petersburg, Lenin did not believe that the communists had enough power and preparation to take over the rule of Russia. The government fell into their hands like an overripe plum because there was no other people or party in Russia with vision and strength enough to assume it. So the Communistic regime began its fateful career with promises of justice and fairness and abundance for the oppressed and toiling masses—the very things the Christian Church should have brought them down the centuries. So Russia changed overnight from a supposedly Christian land to an avowedly atheistic communistic state and the Church was weighed in the balance and found wanting.

In the second place and philosophically *Communism is a startling substitute for Christianity*. We know that Christianity is a philosophy of life, an explanation of the universe, a supreme object of faith, and a certain way of living which we believe to be right and true. We believe that the world is the creation of a personal, intelligent, moral, and infinitely holy Being Whom we come to know as Our Father through Jesus Christ His Son. We believe that Christ is the Revelation of God, and that He gave Himself to die for our sins on the cross: *The just for the unjust, to bring us to God*. We believe that we have the forgiveness of sins, the gift of life everlasting, and the promise of a place in the Kingdom of God through Him. We also believe that we should serve Christ, and follow Him, and keep His commandments out of sheer love and gratitude for what He has done for us. It is our duty, we believe, to make His Gospel known to all men everywhere because *He will come again to judge the quick and the dead*

and to set up His glorious Kingdom of righteousness and peace for ever and ever. This Christian faith is the dearest possession that we have. For it we live and die!

But now Communism has arisen to substitute an entirely different view of life in the minds of men. Some people claim that Communism is only a system of economics in fact more like the Sermon on the Mount than any capitalistic system! But the kind of communism we have to deal with today, the kind that is coming out of Russia, is more than a system of economics; it is also a scheme of politics, and a philosophy of life. It has declared war on religion in general and Christianity in particular. In 1928 the Comintern declared: *The ultimate aim of the Communist International is to replace world capitalist economy by a world system of communism. It will bury forever all mysticism, religion, prejudice, and superstition.* That declaration has never been revoked. Lenin, the greatest thinker of the Communists, made this comment on their beliefs: *The teaching of Marx is all powerful because it is true. It is complete and systematic, giving to people an integrated world view, incompatible with superstition. It is the lawful successor of the best that mankind created in the XIX century in German philosophy, British political economy, and French socialism. Materialism turned out to be the only consistent philosophy true to all the teachings of natural science. . . . the enemies of democracy (communism) endeavored therefore by every means to disprove, undercut, slander materialism, and defended various forms of philosophic idealism, which always amounts in the end to be a defence or support of religion.*

But in spite of all its talk against religion, which it calls superstition, Communism itself turned out to be a religion—a false one, to be sure, and a substitute for Christianity; but nevertheless a man-made religion. It has its beliefs, just as dogmatic as anything in any other religion; it has its doctrines, its cults, its scriptures, its way of life, its sanctified leaders, and its devotees who sacrifice everything in fanatical devotion to the cause, and it has its promise of a millennial goal. Just last week this fanatical worship of Stalin by many people was reported: they call him: *The sun of our life, the great captain of all victories, Comrade Stalin . . . Stalin, the will and intelligence of millions . . . Our beloved father, friend of the working class, the wise leader Stalin. Stalin is our force, our faith, our happiness.* What a substitute for faith in Jesus Christ! The substitution is clear! The Christian believes in Christ; the Communist, in Stalin, or other such leaders; The Christian believes in spiritual reality, the reality of faith, hope, and love; the Communist, in matter and force only; the Communist believes in struggle; the Christian, in service; The Christian believes in individual conversion; the Communist, in mass revolution; the Christian believes in the Gospel of life everlasting for everyone who repents and believes; the Communist believes in the overthrow of the existing order of society and the triumph of one class alone. The Christian believes in the final reign of the Kingdom of God; the Communist believes in the rule of the proletariat dictatorship. Which shall it be?

In the third place and practically, *Communism is a stirring challenge to Christianity.* These two forces, or faiths, or philosophies of life face

each other across the world today in a mighty contest for the souls of men. The one faith stands for law and order, and justice and mercy, and service and self-sacrifice in the Cause of Christ. The other stands for economic communism, political power, and world revolution. We must choose the one or the other; we cannot be neutral, or inactive! We will either give ourselves wholeheartedly to the Christian Faith—as the Church has not been doing in our time—or we will be swept away by the rising tide of materialism.

We must either accept the Communist idea that the world is made up of matter and force, and man, just an animal organism, is to be satisfied with food, and force, and fighting strength; or, we must rededicate ourselves to the Christian faith in a God of love, a world of purpose wherein man has been made in the image of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and called to a life of service in His Kingdom for those less fortunate than ourselves.

We must either acknowledge the Communist leadership of men like Lenin and Stalin with their plots, and intrigues, and their ruthlessness in snuffing out the lives of millions even of their own people to gain their own ends, and hail them as *the sun of our life; the great captain of all victories, our force, our faith, our happiness*; or as true Christians we must acknowledge the sovereignty of God alone, and give our allegiance to His Son as our Saviour, our Friend, and our Guide through life.

We must either yield to the self-sacrificing, fanatical devotion of the Communist followers who give body and soul for their cause and have



suffered ridicule, persecution, loss of property, exile, and imprisonment to make it succeed; or else we must remember that Christ has always called for as great devotion on the part of His followers through ridicule, persecution, suffering, and even death, and that He expects us to maintain a life of faithfulness and obedience and service to Him until His Kingdom come. If we do not do so we may awake some day to discover that Communism has won the battle and become a stinging rebuke to the deadness of our Christianity the world over.

We must either accept the Communist goal of life—a kind of godless, materialistic millenium of mortal existance promised to the masses to beguile them into enduring endless regimentation and a freedomless routine of life here and now with no hope beyond; or we must set our hearts on the glorious Christian hope of the coming of Christ and His Kingdom which also gives us better living, greater joy, and fuller service, and higher justice on earth today than Communism will ever know.

We must either bow to the Communist program of world revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat for all the nations, or we must do our part faithfully, honestly, openly to carry out the program of Him Who said: *Go ye into all the world, preach the Gospel to every creature, make disciples of all the nations . . . lo, I Am with you always.* Which shall it be?



# HOW GOOD A CHRISTIAN?

*preached by*

REV. FRANCIS KINSLER

Sunday Morning, April 20, 1947



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The Elders and the Trustees  
*of the*

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## HOW GOOD A CHRISTIAN?

We often hear the remark: "*I can be just as good a Christian without going to Church.*" It is said a little by people who come to Church some; it is said more by people who come to Church seldom; and it is said most by people who do not come at all. Since we hear this remark so much I think it is our duty to face it squarely and honestly even tho we have ourselves obviously come to Church this morning.

Suppose now a school student said, *I can be just as good a student without going to school*; what would the truant officer say? Suppose a workingman said, *I can be just as good a workingman without going to work*; what would his employer say—on pay day? Suppose a husband did not see his wife much but heard she was saying, *I can be just as good a wife without going home*; what would he say? Suppose a young lady heard her lover saying, *I can be just as good a lover without going around to see her*; what would she say? Suppose a young man was drafted into the army, but he sat at home and said, *I can be just as good a soldier without joining the army or going to the training camp*; what would Uncle Sam say? And when somebody says, *I can be just as good a Christian without going to church*; what shall we say? In all honesty can any able-bodied person be just as good a Christian without going to church?

The answer is, *yes, if he can be just as good a Christian without worshipping God.* But the very

idea of being a Christian without going to Church reveals a vast ignorance of what the Christian Life really is! The Life of Christ is the best example of the Christian Life. He was found in the Temple when He was only twelve years old, and there He asked His parents in astonishment; *Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business in my Father's House?* And were He to meet many self-styled Christian people on a Sunday morning today He would ask in even greater astonishment: *Did you not know that you must be about your Father's business?* Once He said, *I always taught in your synagogues and in the Temple.* He settled the question of the main business of His life at His temptation in the very beginning, when He said, *It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord Thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.* He took the Ten Commandments as the only rule of life for us all, and the first four of them deal solely with the worship of God: *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me*—the object of worship; *Thou shalt not make any graven image, now bow thyself down to it*—the manner of worship; *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord Thy God in vain*—the reverence of worship; and *Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy*—the time of worship. Why, Christian worship in the Church is the first and highest, and most glorious duty and privilege in the Christian Life. Without it human life is a pagan, purposeless, sordid, self-centered, earthbound round of existence. With it life takes on a weekly climax, a fresh beginning, a divine purpose, and an eternal context. It sets our lives in their proper place in the plan of God. On the first day of the week *God began to create the Heavens and the Earth;* on the first day of the week *God raised Christ*

*from the dead, and began to create the new Heavens and the new earth; on the first day of the week God calls us apart to wait upon Him in a renewal of His covenant with us in the dearest and highest hope of our lives. William Temple put it this way: To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind by the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, and to devote the will to the purpose of God. In all honesty, Can any able-bodied person be just as good a Christian without going to Church?*

The answer is, again, *Yes, if he can be just as good a Christian without maintaining a devotional life.* But the Christian Life is not just an occasional good deed, nor a fleeting resolution, nor a sentimental sigh, nor some vague faith in the unknown. The Christian Life is a living, throbbing, pulsing experience of the love, and life, and Spirit of Christ with us. To be sure, this personal inward experience of the presence of God has a practical outward expression; but without the power of the inward experience there is not much possibility of the outward expression. But the Christian Life is something which, once it has been planted within us by the Word of God, becomes a living, growing, groping organism. It needs spiritual food, and spiritual oxygen, and replenishment, and encouragement, and cultivation. Prayer is one of the necessary exercises of the spiritual life, and prayer begins in the House of Prayer at the Hour of Prayer. When this divinely appointed Hour of Worship and Prayer is neglected it is difficult to see how anyone is developing a true, and faithful, and correct life

of fellowship with God. Learning and loving the Word of God is another necessary exercise of the Christian Life, and Church worship is centered about the Bible as an open Book. Here we read it, and study it, and seek to follow it. Some time ago I was told of three bright young men who said they would live the Christian Life without going to Church; but when the question came up of reading their Bibles they said, *Oh, we can't understand the Bible, what's the use of reading it? Can they, then, can anyone live the Christian Life without being willing to wait upon God for just one hour a week in His sanctuary with His Word, at His command, and in His presence?*

The answer is, again, *Yes, if he can be just as good a Christian without enjoying any Christian fellowship.* But the new Testament knows nothing of any individual Christian Life apart from the Christian Fellowship of the Christian Church. From the beginning the Gospel of Christ came to social groups and not just to individuals. *The promise is to you and your children*, cried Peter on the day of Pentecost; and immediately we read that *whole households were baptised, and that they continued steadfast with one accord in the breaking of bread at home and in praising of God in the Temple.* Why, the Gospel of everlasting salvation comes to us in order to bring us into the family of God in the fellowship of His eternal Kingdom of Love. Christian Love expresses itself immediately in love for other Christians: *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another*, wrote John. *He that loveth Him that begat (that is, God the Father of all Christians) loveth Him also that is begotten of Him (that is, all Christians).* Love the brotherhood,

wrote Peter. *Love all men, especially them of the household of faith*, directed Paul. *Lovest thou Me? Feed My sheep*; said Christ. And have you noticed that when people do not come to Church, many of them soon go further and criticise the people who do go? They tell you they don't go to Church because it is full of hypocrites. (By the way, it takes a smarter man than a hypocrite to hide behind the hypocrites!) But the Church is the fellowship of humble, human people who confess their sins and turn to Christ for forgiveness and help; and who seek by mutual help, forbearance, and encouragement to build themselves up in the Christian Life. Man is incurably social, he has to live with his fellow beings to exist, to grow, to become civilized; so the Christian is incurably social; he must have the fellowship of other Christians to exist, to grow, and to become Christianized, and to have a part in the coming Kingdom of God. Can any able-bodied person, then, be just as good a Christian without coming to Church?

The answer is, again, *Yes, if he can be just as good a Christian without supporting the work of Christ*. But the Work of Christ begins in the Church of Christ. The Church is the one agency that represents and promotes the Gospel of Christ. Without the Church the community would soon lose the benefits of Christian truth, and Christian influence, and Christian standards of decency and honor. There is nobody in this town who would want to live here if the Church was not here. Let that person who stays away from Church know that if everybody was doing as he is doing there would be no Church, and soon no Christianity, and soon no conscience, and soon



no decency and honor. Yet he says he can be as good a Christian without going to Church! The work of Christ in the Church is big and varied. Here we preach Christ, and confess Christ, and follow Christ, and serve Christ. Here we make Christ known to the next generation and teach His truth to our boys and girls. (Do you know of any home where the parents do not attend Church but teach their own children to love and serve Christ?) Here we continue our Christian education all the days of our lives; here we band together to bear our witness of Christ before the community, and together with other churches throughout the country and across the earth to support His work in the world. We undertake work for Christ in the Church that we could never touch alone; here we support the great task of the evangelization of the world, Christian Missions at home and abroad, and here we have even our own representative doing the work of Christ for us in far away China! Can anyone do that without coming to Church?

No, his matter of coming to Church has been slighted and slurred too long. Let me quote William Temple again: *This world can be saved from political chaos and collapse by one thing only, and that is worship!* An article in the Reader's Digest described the horrors of the Nazis in Europe and their concentration camps, and drew this conclusion: *The veneer of civilization is dangerously thin—And for only one reason. Let me quote from it: The foul stench of the concentration camps should burden the Christian conscience until Christian men cannot rest. Our contempt for the sacredness of life, our worship at the shrine of our own power, has gone so far that it has*

*taken these horrors to shock us into awareness of the tragic fate toward which we are stumbling. Buchenwald and the other concentration camps spell doom. But is not simply the doom of the Nazis; it is the doom of man unless he can be brought to worship the living God.*

Now let me close with this little editorial by Dr. Bert Culpepper in a Florida newspaper: *If I wanted to be a sailor, I would put to sea; if I wanted to be a doctor, I would haunt the clinics, and the hospitals, and the sick rooms; if I wanted to be a farmer I would get a mule and a plough and get next to the soil. By the same token, If I wanted to be a Christian I would confess Jesus Christ as my Saviour and immediately join some church. You cannot raise corn in a cotton field. One corn stalk needs the association of other corn stalks for fertilization, if big ears are to be grown. So a man who wishes to become a Christian had better join with other Christians in a community of interest, if he is to succeed in the spiritual adventure. The Church is not Heaven. It is a place you get into to learn the way to Heaven. The Church is not for angels, but for men and women who need help and who are willing to help others. I beg of you, and all your friends, don't say, I can be as good a Christian without going to Church; say, rather, I will be a Christian, by God's grace, and serve Him in His Church as best I can.*



# BATHING IN THE OCEAN OF GOD'S LOVE

*preached by*

REV. FRANCIS KINSLER

Sunday Morning, August 3, 1947



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## BATHING IN THE OCEAN OF GOD'S LOVE

We who live by the ocean enjoy its many benefits. The artist rejoices in its ever-changing colors and its ever-moving waters. The fisherman draws his net from the deep. The sailor skims its surface in his boat. We all enjoy its cooling breeze by day and night. On the other hand, were it not for the salt water of the sea the whole earth would have frozen over in the death-grip of a glacier long ago. But he who enters in and bathes himself in the ocean discovers its best benefits.

*Behold the sea,  
The opaline, the plentiful and strong,  
Fresh as the trickling rainbow of July;  
Sea full of food, the nourisher of kinds,  
Purger of earth, and medicine of men;  
Creating a sweet climate by my breath,  
Washing out harms and griefs from memory,  
And, in my mathematic ebb and flow,  
Giving a hint of that which changes not.*

Now the love of God is like an ocean, infinite and immeasurable. We catch sight of this ocean of God's Love in the Christian Gospel. Here we behold the Love of God in its length and breadth, its height and depth. *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have*

*everlasting life. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son into the world that we might live through Him.*

We who live by this ocean of God's Love should certainly know its benefits. We enjoy its gracious influence. We behold its wondrous beauty. We relax by its shores, we draw from its depths, we skim its surface; and certainly, without the ocean of God's Love this old world would have frozen over in the cold grip of death long since. But only he who enters in and bathes himself in the waters of this ocean discovers its benefits.

The Ocean of God's Love presents an Initial Challenge to him who bathes therein. Go to the beach and see! There you will see on a clear day, lying on the sand, many, many people, all attired in bathing suits—perfectly visible to the naked eye—but what a small number of them actually go down to the edge of the water and jump in! And of those who do venture in, some wade in only up to their ankles! others, up to their knees; and others, up to their waist; and only a few plunge in altogether and swim in the deep, especially when the water is cold, or the surf is strong, or the waves beat high.

So it is with the ocean of God's Love. Because it is big, and vast, and broad and deep, many draw back in fear and do not go near its waters; others come down to the edge, and stop there; others wade in gingerly up to their ankles or knees perhaps; but how few venture out and bathe themselves wholly in the ocean of God's

Love. They simply do not trust themselves to the fact that *God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son*, and live in the fullness of that divine love. Many feel the need of something to cling to before they venture out into the depths of this vast ocean, and if you are one of those; here it is: *God is thy dwelling-place, and underneath are the everlasting arms. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out. He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.*

Now the Ocean of God's Love exercises a Cleansing Power over him that bathes therein. When anyone braves the initial challenge and plunges into the water he feels the cleansing power of a bath. In a moment the clear, cool water engulfs him in its embrace and gone are the heat and the dust and the dirt of the earth, washed away by the waters of the sea. The Christian Life begins like that. Indeed, the original Christ-appointed symbol of entering the life of faith is exactly that—a bath! The Sacrament of Baptism is a sign and seal of the washing away of our sins, and of our engrafting into Christ. Becoming a Christian is a matter of entering the ocean of God's love and yielding oneself to its cleansing, healing powers. The Love of God has the power to forgive our sins, to wash away evil, and to purge the soul of its unloveliness and sin. One can stay at a distance and enjoy only a faint influence of the divine love or one can come close to the edge and lie down and relax, and grow lazy;

or he can skim the surface, or even try to drag its depths, but only he who plunges in and bathes himself in the love of God will find its cleansing, redeeming power. It is no accident that the Sacrament of Baptism is connected directly with the *Forgiveness*, the "*letting go*" of sins; and was introduced to the world with the cry, *Repent and be baptised everyone of you from your sins*. He who discovers the Love of God in the Death of Christ learns that *he removes our transgressions from us as far as the east is from the west*.

The ocean of God's Love also exerts a Stimulating Effect upon him that bathes therein. The cleansing experience of entering the water is followed quickly by a cooling, quickening, invigorating effect that is like a new life. It is partly the psychological effect of having made the plunge and entered into the water. It is partly the physical effect of having felt the cool, salt water. When anyone experiences the Love of God through his Christian Faith, believing that *God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son*, the wonderful, uplifting, transforming effect is partly the reward for yielding himself up unreservedly to that which is best, and partly the sense of the pure and perfect love of God. The Love of God as it was first displayed at the cross of Jesus, divine self-giving, redeeming, enters into the life of a person and surrounds him on all sides, and lifts him up out of his old, sordid life of selfish, sinful ways, and brings him into the new, clean world of God Himself. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, all things are become new*. Whenever anyone has the courage to trust himself to the Gospel of *Him*

*Who loved us, and gave Himself for us, and responds to that Divine Love with his own love in return, he will enter into a new experience of exhilarating life in all its fullness. He will begin to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fullness of God.*

The Ocean of God's Love also possesses a Sustaining Force upon the bather. Many people fail to enjoy the pleasures of bathing and the possibilities of swimming because they do not understand that the water has the power to uphold anyone who enters into it. They forget that the human body is lighter than water, and can therefore stay afloat in it. They dread the prospect of sinking to the bottom and drowning. But the swimmer never has to keep himself afloat, the ocean will see to that; he only has to push forward in swimming, or turn over and float. This is a parable of the life of faith. We are surrounded by the Love of God; He will keep us in His hand. *Underneath are the everlasting arms and overhead, the overarching love of God.* It is for us to entrust ourselves to Him, to push forward in faith, or to commit our lives in confidence, believing that *in so loving the World as to give His only begotten Son that we should not perish,* He has loved us with an everlasting love.

Lord Byron discovered the sustaining force of the ocean and wrote these lines:

*And I have loved thee, ocean! and my joy  
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be  
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward; from a boy  
I wantoned with thy breakers.*

But Brother Lawrence, a simple cook in a monastery of the Middle Ages, discovered the greater force of the Love of God surrounding and sustaining him, and he wrote: *I turn the cake that is frying on the pan for the Love of God; and, in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were upon my knees at the Blessed Sacrament.* The power of the Christian Life will never be found in struggle and strain; but in faith and spiritual relaxation, relying upon God's all-sustaining and never-failing love. Faith in God through Christ discovers a love that forgives sins, that softens circumstances, that transcends the unknown, and pervades the future.

For the Ocean of God's Love also holds a Saving Promise for every one who bathes therein. Great must be the fear of anyone upon the water who has not learned to swim and felt the sustaining power of the ocean: whether he be fisherman, fishing in the deep; or sailor, skimming the surface; or the bather, wading along the edge. He moves in peril of his life. One time I was boating on a river in Korea. The current was swift and the flood was running high. Along came a young Korean skulling in a dinghy as frail as an eggshell. I could not refrain from asking him across the water. *What if the boat capsizes? Then*, he said, *I sink and drown: what else?* But when one has plunged into the ocean of God's love, and experienced its cleansing, quickening, sustaining power through faith in the fact that *God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son*, he has found the saving power and promise of God. He



has found the love that not only provides for him day by day, and during the years of his life, but the love that changes not throughout eternity. Either we commit ourselves to the Love of God wholeheartedly, unreservedly, and go forward in faith; or else we fall back in mortal fear of death. Let us entrust ourselves freely to the ocean of God's love.

*Could we with ink the ocean fill  
And were the sky of parchment made,  
Were every stock on earth a quill,  
And every man a scribe by trade;  
To write the love of God above  
Would drain the ocean dry,  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,  
Though stretched from sky to sky.  
O love of God, how rich and pure,  
How measureless and strong,  
It shall forever more endure—  
The saints' and angels' song.*

East Hampton Star



# CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

*preached by*

REV. FRANCIS KINSLER

*Sunday Morning, November 9, 1947*



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This morning I am going to give you an astounding, a seemingly impossible text: "You shall be perfect as your Father in Heaven is Perfect." This text doesn't just call for the best that is in us, it calls for perfection. It says, "You shall be perfect;" and it calls for the ultimate in perfection: "You shall be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect."

This text invites immediate and violent reactions. There is the matter-of-fact reaction of us ordinary people. "Be perfect?" we ask, "Why, that's just what we're not! We're human, and finite, and weak, and wayward—anything but perfect. To tell us to be perfect is to bring a horrible contradiction into our lives." There is also the hypocritical reaction of the Pharisee, who pretends to be better than he is in order to meet the claims of his perfect religion, and becomes intolerably proud, and bigoted, and prays, "I thank thee that I am not as other men." Then there is the cold reaction of the critic, who takes the perfect standard of Christianity and applies it to other people and points out their imperfections as a substitute for being perfect himself. Then there is the hopeless reaction of the cynic, who says, "Be perfect? That's a joke, we all do a thousand evil things every day, and we know it; why talk about perfection?" So this fellow gives up the moral struggle in disgust and lives a happy-go-lucky, aimless sort of life, delighting in the evil in himself and in others as a final proof that there is no ultimate good in life; or else he gives up in sad disillusionment, as just last week

one of the ablest diplomats of this country committed suicide because of the apparent hopelessness of the human situation.

But let us face this Counsel of Perfection calmly and squarely. What did Christ mean when He said, "You shall be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect"? What is this Perfection in Christianity?

Well, in the first place, *we have a Perfect God in Christianity*. This is the glorious Christian Message that comes to us: "Your Father in Heaven is Perfect." We believe in God as the Absolute. The God of the Christian Revelation is the God of Ultimate Reality. He is the source and the essence of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. He is the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. He is the High and Holy One, and yet He dwells in the heart of the humble. We think of God as like ourselves, stripped of all our finiteness and sin. "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." He is the Matchless, the Transcendent, the Adorable One. He is perfect in all His ways. The witness of all creation from the first dazzling moment of creation to the last moment of recorded time shall be this: "Thou art true and righteous altogether." God is the God of perfection.

But as the Character of God is perfect, so are His commandments. The connection between the two is simple and inescapable, as our text indicates: "You shall be perfect as your Father in

Heaven is perfect." Only the perfect religion of the true God speaks to us in the imperative mood of absolute perfection. For God, in His perfection, cannot issue commands that are less perfect. Can you imagine Him saying in the Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me, or at least not many"; or, "Thou shalt not steal—much; Thou shalt not kill—often; or, Thou shalt not covet—openly"? Ah, no, the moral commandments of life issue from the character of the Eternal, and as He is perfect, so are the requirements of His law. The commandment of love, for instance, comes from the Love of God. "Beloved," the apostle of love argues, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love." So this final, perfect law of life, the law of love, derives from the heart of the Infinite. As long as God is God, the God of love; this will remain the law of life: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." So Christ places this text on the unchanging character of God: "You shall be perfect, as your Father in Heaven is perfect."

"Ah, but," we object, "This is too much out of this world for us." We are all human beings, full of faults and frailties, living a mortal life of flesh and blood. How can this Divine Counsel of Perfection be brought into our Human World of imperfection? The answer comes to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

*For we have a Perfect Gospel in Christianity.*

It begins with the person of Christ. He is the Incarnation of the Infinite and Eternal in our world of time and space. He has brought the perfect holiness of God into our imperfect world of sin. He is the perfect Son of the perfect Father. We see His perfection in the humility, the purity, the nobility of His life. He obeyed the commandments of God perfectly, and He fulfilled the will of His Father to perfection. He has made known to us the perfect attributes of God the Father; through Him we come to find the glory of the Infinite One.

Now see what happened when this perfect Jesus led His perfect life in this imperfect world. In Plato's Republic, written long before the time of Christ, there is a startling description of what would happen to a perfectly righteous man in this unrighteous world. Let me quote it: "The perfectly righteous man, without doing any wrong, would assume the appearance of the grossest injustice; yea, he shall be scourged, fettered, tortured, deprived of his eyesight, and after having endured all possible sufferings, fastened to a post; must restore again the beginning and prototype of righteousness." What a striking forecast of the fate of Jesus! For it was a foregone conclusion that He, living His life of unswerving devotion to righteousness and truth, would incur the dislike, and the hostility of men. Men would think of Him as Iago speaks of Cassius, in Shakespeare's Othello: "He hath a daily beauty in his life that makes me ugly." Christ knew it would be so; He accepted it as God's plan for Him: He accepted

it as a burden to bear, a cross to endure, a death to die; and a fate to overcome. And in this wonderful mystery of Christ's taking upon Himself, willingly, gladly, the reproaches and the sins of men, dying at their hands, He wrought their redemption, and took away their sins. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." "He died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." This gracious taking upon Himself the hostility of men, and bearing their sins is the very heart of our Perfect Gospel in Christianity. He alone has the power to forgive sins, to redeem the sinner, and to change our lives, and bring us back to Him Who is perfect in His Righteousness and in His Love. Whatever God does, He does perfectly. He takes away our human imperfection and our sinful guilt in the redeeming sacrifice of His own Son, and bestows upon us the full and free gift of forgiveness. Have you believed in Him, and accepted His Perfect Gospel of forgiveness full and free, for time and eternity?

Yes, we have a Perfect God in Christianity, and we have a Perfect Gospel; and we have more; *we also have a Perfect Goal in Christianity*. Perfection is not the beginning; it is the end and aim of our Christian Life. At the beginning we discover that we are utterly imperfect, unrighteous, unsatisfactory in the sight of God. That's why we begin the Christian Life, because we need

the forgiveness of sins, and we find that in Jesus Christ. No Christian has the idea that he is perfect, or even remotely near perfection. On the contrary, he is so imperfect and sinful that he can only accept the forgiveness of sins as the free gift of God through faith alone. But when he does this, his life takes on a new beginning, and he begins to move in a new direction, toward a new, and amazing, Christian goal of life: nothing less than the goal of perfection. This perfect goal of life, however far-off and remote it may seem at present, is the only goal that can challenge us to rise to the full measure of human possibilities as created in the image of God and redeemed by the blood of Christ! So Jesus was doing a very gracious and realistic thing, when He gave us the command: "You shall be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect."

This Perfect Goal of Life therefore begins with the Forgiveness of Sins. That wipes out the failures of the past, and also of the present, and even of the future. It also gives us a right relation with God; it gives us a new Life in Him, for God grants His Spirit to them that put their trust in Him; and, the New Testament says, "We are created anew in the Image of Him, Who created all things." We become His children, and as children we are to grow up into the likeness of our Father. We believe that God is with us, and that He will give us the strength to grow up into the likeness of Christ, for "Whom He foreknew, them He also foreordained to be conformed to the Image of His Son. . ."



But God does not complete His work in a day. He takes time to do His work of perfection. He takes years to grow a tree. He takes centuries to produce a human race. He takes ages and ages to create a universe; and He will certainly take a whole lifetime to remake each one of us into children of His own liking, and then the task will not be complete. "Let patience have her perfect work," wrote James. It also takes something on our part for God to complete His work in us. It takes patience, and faith, and obedience, and discipline. It takes encouragements and discouragements, joys and sorrows, prosperity and adversity, and even disappointments and sorrows and sufferings to be made into the likeness of the Son of Man! It takes glad, and active, and joyous response on our part for God to do His perfect work in us.

And remember, this Goal of Perfection in the Christian Life, not being any little, earth-bound prize of a moment, but the eternal work of the living God in us, will not be reached until the last, crowning climax of history when the Heavens and the earth shall be changed, and God's Kingdom come, and the Christ appear; and "we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is." Only then will we begin to comprehend the Perfection of the God of glory and of grace, and then we will say,

*He was better than all my hopes;*

*He was greater than all my fears;*

*He made a bridge of all my broken works,*

*And a rainbow of all my tears.*



# OUR CHRISTIAN IDEOLOGY

*preached by*

REV. FRANCIS KINSLER

Sunday Morning, November 16, 1947



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## OUR CHRISTIAN IDEOLOGY

The world is ominously divided to-day between the ideas of Private Ownership and Public Ownership of Property. The Capitalist claims that he is entitled to all the wealth that he can get in the competition of free enterprise. The Communist claims that the government must own all things in order that everybody may get his fair share of this world's goods. The Capitalist charges that Communism leads to the absolute dictatorship of the police state where no room is left for the rights of the individual or freedom of enterprise. The Communist charges that Capitalism involves a ruthless struggle between individuals with every man fighting for himself and "the devil take the hindmost", and between classes with the "haves" fighting against the "have-nots" while the rich grow richer; and the poor, poorer.

This contest between the ideas of Private Ownership and Public Ownership of Property rages across the world to-day. Every country is being drawn into it and is taking sides between the two extremes of Capitalism and Communism, with the United States and Russia facing each other at the opposite poles of this field of human struggle. For the world has forgotten that neither Private Ownership nor Public Ownership is the correct idea of property. The true ideology is God's Ownership of Property. *The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof: the world and they that dwell therein.* The Christian believes that everything in this world belongs to God its Maker. And believe me, unless the Christian idea is accepted and carried out, the conflict between Capitalism and Communism will be fierce, and fatal.

Now the Christian is neither a Capitalist, nor a Communist, but a Steward. A Steward is one who has been put in charge of the property of another. The word *Steward* comes from the Anglo-Saxon words *Sti*, a house, or hall, or sty—and any house that does not belong to God finally becomes a sty; and *Ward*, a warden, or keeper, or manager: we must either be keepers of the house, or sty; or simply occupants thereof! We have been entrusted with the care of all that belongs to Him! Jesus told us this again and again in His great stories like that of the nobleman who went into a far country to receive a kingdom, and entrusted his goods to his servants, saying that he would come again and take up a reckoning with them.

*Our Christian Ideology, then, begins with God's Ownership of all things.* This truth is fundamental to our Christian thinking—however far-off and forgotten it has become in the godless and greedy wrangling over who owns what in our modern world. If anyone cannot say with gladness and gratitude, "*The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof*" he simply has not understood the Christian view of life. God is the Lord of the Universe, Possessor of Heaven and Earth, the Creator of the ends of the world; the sun, moon, and the stars are the work of His fingers: they belong to Him. When the scientist delves into the mighty secrets of nature, he is but discovering the handiwork of God. When the artist paints a glowing sunset he is but copying a divine masterpiece. When the farmer cultivates the ground and the seed bursts into life, and grows into a plant and yields its golden fruit, God is permitting him to have an infinitesimal part in the work of God's field. He may plant and he may water; but only God gives the in-

crease. When the manufacturer takes his raw materials he uses them to make his products only in the way in which God made it possible for him to use them. If man, working in this House of God, should say, "By my own skill and my cunning I have made all these things, and they belong to me", he has slipped back into the darkness of ancient idolatry. It is not for him to fight over the false gods of Private and Public Ownership of Property, but rather to exclaim "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof", and to act as God's faithful Steward over this world's goods.

"Ah, but", you say, "this world isn't acting on any such idea as God's Ownership of all things". No, it isn't, and that's the trouble, and that's where the Church of Jesus Christ comes in. Man has failed to acknowledge the Lordship of God and brought untold calamity upon his world, so God has wrought a work of redemption, and established a new house of His own world in the Church of Jesus Christ. In this new Household of Faith God is not only our Maker but our Redeemer. We are not our own, we are bought with a price, the precious price of the blood of Christ; we belong to Him and His Kingdom. We are as never before the Stewards of God in the House of His Church. God has committed the things of His eternal Kingdom to us: we are the Stewards of the manifold grace of God in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We have been entrusted with the keys of the Kingdom of God, the knowledge of the truth, the gospel of everlasting life. We have become Stewards not only of this world's goods, but also of the whole treasure of the redeeming love of God in Jesus Christ. He is the Nobleman who went into a far country to receive a Kingdom, who entrusted His estate to His servants, saying that He would come again and take up a reckoning with them. Our ideology of God's

Ownership of Property involves also our becoming His Stewards of things both temporal and spiritual.

*Our Christian Ideology, then, continues with Man's Stewardship of all things.* The Steward has charge of his Master's House and all its belongings.

*We are Stewards of Life itself.* Our lives belong to Him who made them. "*It is He that hath made us and not we ourselves.*" He has granted us the most precious gift of life with a purpose. Our lives are to be directed and developed according to His plan for us. It may be good democracy to say that a man is free to do what he pleases with his own life, but it is not good Christianity. Since life is the gift of God and belongs to Him we are not free to abuse, or belittle, or to destroy it. When people say, "We will do as we please because it won't hurt anybody else," they forget that they belong to God, and injury to them is a loss to the House of God.

*We are also Stewards of Time.* In an Amos 'n Andy Show Andy is keeping a newsstand, and a pretty girl comes up and asks, "Have you got Life?" and he answers, "Yes, I'se got life, and I'se got Time, too." We all have life, and we all have time, although not necessarily to be used in the way that Andy probably had in mind at the moment. We all have time, we all have all the time there is; time is the very stuff of life, and God gives it to us, measuring it out in precious quantities moment by moment, day by day, year by year for our use. There is a time for everything, says the Preacher in Ecclesiastes, a time for building and a time for tearing down; a time for talk, and a time for silence; a time for laughter, and a time for tears. But is there no time for God, the Author of Time, and the God of

Eternity? Yes, we are Stewards of Time, God's Time, lent to us moment by moment to do the most important business of His Kingdom. So many people say, "I would come to Church, or do this or that for the Lord, but I don't have time". Well, we do have time, all the time there is, and it is given us primarily to serve Him, and to make doubly sure He gave us more time, one day in seven just to give back to Him in the gladness of worship and service. Last Sunday night I think there were a hundred automobiles parked near the Movie Palace while the people worshipped at the shrine of Bing Crosby, and at the only House of God open for worship in the village there was but one automobile parked alone.

*But we are Stewards of Time, and also of our Talents, and our Treasures.* God has given us the power to think and to choose, but have we chosen Him? He has given us the power to talk, but how much do we talk of His grace? He has given us the ability to work, but how much do we work for His Kingdom? He has given us the ability to earn money and amass wealth, but how much treasure are we laying up in Heaven? He has given us the ability to win friends, but how many do we win for Christ? He has given us the power to exert influence, but how much influence do we exert for God and His Righteousness? We think easily of our lives, our homes, our belongings, our time and our talents and our bank accounts as belonging to us; but they all belong to God: *The Earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof. We are not our own, we are bought with a price. We are the Stewards of all things.*

*Our Christian Ideology concludes with Our Accountability for all things. Daniel Webster*



once said that the greatest thought He ever had was of his accountability to God. Jesus impressed this great thought upon His followers when He told them the story of the Nobleman going into a far country to receive a Kingdom, letting His goods out to His servants, saying, "I will come again, and take up a reckoning with you." He gave us all that we have and He expects us to use it faithfully in His service. *Blessed is the wise and faithful servant whom, when his cometh shall find so doing.* "But if", Jesus added, "that servant shall begin to eat and to drink and be drunk with the drunken, the Lord of that servant will come in an hour that he knoweth not." Truly we know not the hour, nor the day, nor the year. It might be to-night, or tomorrow, or next year; or before we have gone far into the atomic age—who knows? But we do know that we are accountable to God, and some day He will take up the reckoning with us.

When He calls us to account for our lives shall one say, "Oh, yes, I enjoyed my life immensely, with all its thrills?" Then He will say, "Yes, that was My gift to you, but what did you do with it for Me?" Will one then say, "Why, I worked hard and earned a living." Then He will say, "That, too, was a good part of My gift to you, the health and strength and the opportunity to work in this world; but did you work for Me?" Will one then say, "Why, I had a family to support, and children to care for." "Yes," He will answer, "That was a still greater and more wonderful gift to you: I gave you a loved one, and little children in your image—and Mine; but did you bring them up to love the Lord Jesus, and to know the Bible, and eager to serve me?" "Well," such a one may answer further, "I belonged to the Church." "Yes, you belonged to the Church, and that was a very special gift of Mine to you

and all your community; the Church of Jesus Christ with light and truth, and Christian decency without which you would have been a raw savage; you belonged to the Church; but what did you *do* in My Church, for *Me*?" "Well, I went once in a while, at least at Christmas and Easter." "Yes, that was the highest privilege I gave you," will He not say, "To Worship Me, and to receive My Life, and My truth in Christ; and Easter and Christmas, Who gave you them by His birth and His Ressurrection? But in this going to Church of yours, did you give Me yourself, your whole heart and mind?" "Well," he may answer, "I always told my children to go to Church." "But did you not realize My gift there, in the opportunity, the truth that was taught and My Faithful Workers in that Church and Sunday School to which you could send your children; what did you do for your children in Sunday School and Church?" "Well, at any rate," this one may say, "I believed, and I took Communion, at least once a year." "You believed, and you took Communion." Well He did reply finally, you took Communion." Will He not reply finally, "You took the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, the sacrament of His death for your life; that was My ultimate gift to you, but what did you give for Me? Did you squander all this, thoughtlessly, selfishly on yourself to the end; or did you receive these gifts of Mine and devote them gratefully, gladly, faithfully in My Service, for Me?" Blessed is that wise and faithful servant, whom, when His lord cometh shall find so doing.



# IS THERE ANY JUSTICE?

*preached by*

REV. FRANCIS KINSLER

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## IS THERE ANY JUSTICE?

Perhaps the most pointed question a man can ask is this: *Is There Any Justice at the Heart of Life, or Not?* This question arises in a world when one person is born healthy, and another is born sickly, or blind, or defective. It arises in a world where one person enjoys all the benefits of wealth and position and culture, and another pines away in the misery of the slums. Or it may arise in the experience of someone thrust aside in the race of life by someone else more unscrupulous and ambitious than himself. Or it may spring out of the infamy of history, where nation after nation has ground down other nations and peoples in the mad struggle for national advantage and aggrandizement. The whole tragedy of human suffering and struggle raises this question: *Is There Any Justice at the Heart of Life, or Not?*

Well, the very fact that we ask this question indicates that there is at least *a sense of justice* in our own hearts! Deep down in our own souls we know that there should be a principle of justice in the world whether we see it or not. This very conviction of our own minds tells us that there is some principle of justice in the world. Otherwise it would not even occur to us to raise the question. We would simply be living like the wild beasts of the field, and not know the difference. Of course a person can begin to live like a wild beast, flaunt his own sense of right and wrong, and fling himself down the primrose path of sin and self-destruction until, like some Macbeth who has

hacked his way into hopeless shame and blood-guiltiness, he may cry out:

*Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more: it is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing*

But we know better than that. We are born with that innate sense of right and wrong which Browning calls *the great beacon light which God sets in us all*. In childhood we learn quickly to say: *That isn't fair!* at least when our own interests are involved. We always know that we should do the right, even when we don't do it. In fact, I suspect that nine-tenths of what we call the inequalities and injustices in the world come from our own failure to live up to what we know is right. What a change would come over the world if we all set our hearts on the right! Let me state this in the lovely words of an ancient Chinese proverb: *If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character. If there is beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home. If there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation. If there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.*

There is also, I think, a suggestion of justice in the vast world of nature. Of course, there is much in the universe that seems raw and without reason. Tennyson speaks of *nature red in tooth and claw*. But nevertheless, the existence of an unchanging, inexorable reign of law in the material universe is the most profound discovery of

modern science. The sun does not lag a fraction of a second from its appointed time of rising in the morning, and that's more than we can say of ourselves! The earth does not wander a fraction of an inch from its appointed course, although it travels millions of miles every year, and what human being can claim that? Every single atom of matter acts exactly according to the law of its nature so that we take for granted the absolute reliability of the world in which we live. Take the strange, invisible law of gravity. If it should fail us for just a moment of time we would all fall head-over-heels straightway into the bottomless ocean of space. The sun and moon would totter, the earth would stagger like a drunken man, and the crack of doom would sound. But still the world continues on its way day after day, year after year, millenium after millenium, unfailingly, unfalteringly, in the unchanging faithfulness of the reign of law. And this amazing reign of law in the natural world is but a faint suggestion of the reign of perfect law and righteousness in the unseen world of spirit and truth.

We must also recognize *a show of justice* in the confused world of men. From time immemorial men have striven together for some semblance of justice in their affairs. The most primitive tribe has its code of ethics. The most advanced civilization has its elaborate system of laws, and courts, and judges, and juries, and trials, and sentences. We know from bitter experience that there must be some kind of justice in a world of free people if we hope to live together

in decency and order. Even the most outrageous aggressor never undertakes his ambitions without first attempting some sort of self-justification, however specious. It has now become appallingly clear in the development of civilization that some principle of worldwide justice and righteousness must prevail, or mankind will destroy itself. We come to the inescapable conclusion that we live in a world of moral law and order and that man, although he is free to go his own way, must live accordingly, or dash himself against the final reality of infinite and perfect justice at the heart of life.

*Ah, but, someone may object, for all this talk of a moral order, and a principle of justice in the universe, we face the actual fact of rank injustice between man and man, class and class, and nation and nation. This is indeed the most pointed problem in a world of free, finite people. We do go the ways of injustice even in a world of God's overruling and perfect justice. This is the anomaly. The King put it this way in the play Hamlet:*

*In the corrupted currents of this world,  
Offense's gilded hand may shove by justice,  
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself  
Buys out the law: but 'tis not so above:  
There is no shuffling, there the action lies  
In his true nature: and we ourselves compell'd  
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults  
To give in evidence.*

For there is a certainty of judgment in the world to come! Justice is a matter of eternal truth and righteousness. It is the will of God in Heaven.

Once there was a disastrous train wreck near London. People said it was an act of God and the victims were punished for their sins. But Charles Spurgeon preached one of his greatest sermons about it. That accident, he said, happened according to the laws of nature; but the punishment of people, he added, awaits the judgment of God in Heaven. The victims of the accident of the train were all kinds of people good and bad, believing and non-believing: but they all suffered alike. Therefore it was no moral act of divine judgment. In fact, he went on to point out, the absence of swift, sure justice in this world is one of the most convincing proofs that there is another world where there is a true justice at the bar of God. Have you not felt your heart burn with indignation at some outrageous act of injustice on earth which taught you that there must be some satisfying act of justice in Heaven?

*Three men went out one summer night,  
Nor care had they, or aim,  
And dined and drank. "Ere we go home  
We'll have," they said, "A game."*

*Three girls began that summer night  
A life of endless shame  
And went through drink, disease, and death  
As swift as racing flame.*

*Lawless, and homeless, foul, they died;  
Rich, loved, and praised, the men:  
But when they all shall meet with God,  
And justice speaks: what then?*

Ah, yes, the accumulating evidence of a prin-

ciple of justice at the heart of life suddenly introduces a shift in the argument, and turns against us. The question is no longer *is there a justice at the heart of life?* It is now *since there is a principle of absolute justice at the heart of life, where does that leave us?* Having come this far in our search for justice, and having found it, we must go on and find something more. We must find some deliverance, some *salvation from the perfect, the inescapable justice of God*. Otherwise we stand guilty and doomed in our human sin and unrighteousness before the awful judgment-seat of God. But wonderful to say, we do find this saving kind of righteousness in the Gospel of Christ. Paul's Letter to the Romans, a magnificent exposition of the meaning of man's salvation through God's righteousness in Christ, begins with this ringing statement: *I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes. . . . for therein is revealed a righteousness (or, justice) of God from faith to faith.*

What is this righteousness that saves? We have been thinking of a divine righteousness that judges, and condemns the unrighteous. But here is a new and higher righteousness that forgives, and redeems! This is the righteousness of God displayed in the Gospel of His Son. It is a righteousness of God based on His infinite love. It is a righteousness of God expressed in the life and in the death of Jesus Christ. It is a righteousness of God fulfilled in His sacrificial suffering and His substitutionary death on the cross. It is a righteousness of God that bears your sin and guilt and mine. It is a righteousness of God wherein he

transfers our sin and guilt to Christ in His death, and His righteousness and life to us, because *he died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God*. It is a righteousness of God that not only forgives our sins, and justifies us, but also brings us back to God, changes our hearts, grants us life everlasting, and sets our feet in the paths of righteousness. It is a righteousness of God that does not depend upon any goodness in us, or in any virtue of the good works of man; it is a free gift which He gives us through faith alone. It is a righteousness of God that alone can meet the need of a struggling, sinning humanity, bring justice out of injustice, and lay the firm foundation for the Kingdom of Heaven. This righteousness of God, offered to us in the Christian Gospel, is our one hope of standing before the eternal throne of God and finding everlasting grace, mercy, and peace. This righteousness of God fulfils the promise of Jesus Himself: *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled*. God grant that you believe this Gospel of the redeeming righteousness of God in Jesus Christ, and receive it.



# THE RIGHT PSYCHIATRY

*preached by*

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## THE RIGHT PSYCHIATRY

Psychiatry is a modern word for a modern science. It is that branch of medicine which deals with mental disorder, and the increase of mental disorder is a modern problem. Half the hospital beds in this country are occupied by mental cases, and the number is on the increase. The chief army psychiatrist in World War II reports that one out of every eight men was rejected in the draft for mental illness. He says that sixty-two percent of the patients in veteran hospitals are psychiatric problems. He adds this word: "We have many, evidences of a sick world."

I wish to suggest this morning that our Christian Faith has the best, the only complete cure for the mental sickness of the world. Let me state this in the words of a leading psychologist, Lewis Sherril, in his book, *"Guilt and Redemption"*: *The therapy which the psychiatrist effects with a necessarily limited few is offered to all men everywhere upon the observance of certain conditions . . . Christianity puts its offer to heal the guilt of man is a cosmic and eternal framework, as psychiatry by its own nature cannot do.* See now how this works.

In Christian Pschiatry, first of all, we go to the *Right Psychiatrist*. Everybody, it is said, ought to go to a psychiatrist at some time. One psychiatrist recently affirmed that every minister certainly ought to go to a psychiatrist (and for

reply I would say that every psychiatrist might do better by going to a Christian minister). And, we are told, you must go to the *Right* psychiatrist. The right psychiatrist is one who can give you time and attention, and a genuine, patient interest in your particular problem. He must be able to win your confidence, hear your confession, accept your inmost thought, anxiety, and even the resentment that the patient will feel toward the one who brings out your humiliating, inner experiences. Yes, we are told, we must go to the right psychiatrist, trust him completely, open our hearts, minds, and souls to him unreservedly, and return to him again and again and again—at fifteen dollars a visit!

But let me say that there is One indeed to whom we must go, again and again, and trust Him completely, and open our heart, mind, and spirit to Him unreservedly—One to Whom we should unburden our fears, anxieties, and our feelings of frustration, sin, and guilt—the living God. For He is our Maker and Redeemer. He alone fully knows the human heart, and its inmost thoughts and feelings, its deepest troubles and its highest aspirations, its sense of guilt, and its desire for release. Yes, Christian Psychiatry is first of all a matter of going to the right psychiatrist, trusting Him, confessing your need, and seeking His guidance, letting Him bear your burden of sin, and the sense of guilt. This is no new-fangled science. It is the divinely-appointed solution for the age-old problem of man. He is always inviting us to come to Him. Listen:

*Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, Saith the LORD. Come unto Me, All ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. He that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.*

The patient, remember, must come to the psychiatrist, and he must come willingly, readily, confidently for the healing of his soul. Psychiatry is a modern word for a modern science, and this modern science is a human effort to cure the mental disorder of the world; but would the world be so mentally sick to-day if its people had clung to Him Who is the great Physician of the soul all through these fearful modern years?

In Christian Psychiatry we also get at the *root cause of our trouble*. Now different people think to find our root trouble in different things. The doctor may think he finds it in a bit of undigested cheese, or a bursting appendix. The dentist may think he finds it in an infected tooth. The communist thinks he finds it in our capitalistic money, but when he takes that away our troubles don't end. But the psychiatrist expects to find our root trouble deep down in the subconscious world of our mind and spirit. It is usually said to be something covered up, hidden deep in the subconscious from the days of early childhood. Maybe the patient has been mistreated by his parents, perhaps he has done something against his own conscience, perhaps he has had a sudden shock of fear or shame or frustration and a sense of guilt fastens upon his soul and warps, and thwarts his inner life. The psychiatrist thinks

he has to dig deep into the roots of this person's life, unearth the cause of trouble, and show it to the patient to help him get rid of it. So he probes deep, and he finds inward sickness, and vast disorder. Let me quote the leading psychiatrist of our time, Professor Jung, in his book, *"Modern Man In Quest Of A Soul"*: *If a man turns away from the terrifying prospect of a blind world in which building and destroying successively tip the scale, and if he turns his gaze inward upon the recesses of his own mind, he will discover a chaos and darkness there which he would gladly ignore. Science has destroyed even the refuge of the inner life. What was once a sheltering haven has become a place of terror. Yet it is almost a relief to come upon so much evil, in the depths of our own minds. We are able to believe, at least, that we have discovered the root of the evil of mankind.* So modern psychiatry has plunged deep into the bottomless depths of the human soul far enough to find chaos, darkness, and a depth of evil. But what is the meaning of all this? Modern man does not know. The ordinary psychiatrist just doesn't get at the root cause of the mental disorder in the life of man.

But it is stated in all simplicity in the Christian Gospel. It is the sin of man's having separated himself from God His Maker and Redeemer, and set up his own will in independence of the divine. It is a condition of spiritual revolt against the sovereignty of God in the inner life of man, and in that condition the inner life of man cannot but become a world of chaos, and a wilderness

of confusion, as the psychiatrists have discovered to their own dismay. But the Christian Gospel has always diagnosed the root cause of man's trouble. Here it is: *The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The wages of sin is death. Why will ye turn from He ,and die saith the Lord?* That is it: finite man is lost apart from the infinite God; perishing in his own independent world of self-will set up in opposition to the will of God. We have indeed many evidences of a sick world, and the root cause is the absence of a deep, widespread, obedient faith in God. Take away Him Who is *Infinite, Eternal, Unchangeable, All-Glorious, and All-Gracious, the Fountain of Life, and Light, and Love*, and man is left in darkness, chaos, and confusion indeed.

But in the Right Psychiatry we also gain the *Real Cure* of our souls. The ordinary psychiatrist probes into the inner workings of a complex human personality and no doubt brings relief to the patient who is ready to receive such help; but the genuine cure of souls belongs to God Himself. The whole Gospel of Christ is directed toward the healing of the sin-sick soul of man. The Great Healer comes to us with His infinite love in Jesus His Son. For man's fundamental sickness is sin, and the cure is the redeeming, reconciling love of God, giving Himself to us in the person, the life, and death, and resurrection of His Son our Saviour. *He came to seek and to save that which was lost, and to give His life a ransom for many.* Let any sin-sick soul, any

troubled spirit, any anxious heart look on the cross of Jesus, and into the face of the risen Christ, and He will feel for himself the healing touch of God. He forgives sin, softens the heart, redeems the soul. He bears our sins, He quickens our heart, He quiets our conscience, He heals our inner wounds, pouring in the oil and wine of His own Spirit of love, granting us the experience of His full pardoning, and transforming grace. This experience alone can fully relax our inner tensions, remove our sins and sense of guilt, lighten our darkness, and bring order and peace into the human soul. Only the gentle, skilful touch of Him who created the heart can heal it, and restore it to the fullness of life in fellowship with Him Who is the fullness of life. A leading English psychiatrist, Dr. J. A. Hadfield, makes a minimum statement here when he says, *I am convinced that the Christian religion is one of the most valuable and potent influences for producing that harmony and peace of mind and that confidence of soul which is needed to bring health and power to a large portion of nervous patients.*

And in the right psychiatry we give ourselves to the *Rewarding Call* of the Christian Life. For the psychiatrist has never finished his job with a patient until he has given him something new, and big, and uplifting for which to live. Otherwise, the patient slips right back into his old mental disorders, brooding over his old troubles, his inner tensions and fears and sense of shame and guilt—a victim once more of the old sinful,



self-centered kind of living which is the main cause of man's unhappiness and mental illness. As Martin Luther observed long before the days of the psychiatrists: *I know from my own experience, as well as from that of all troubled souls, that it is solely our self-conceit which is at the root of all our disquietude.* Or, to put our point in a more positive form, as stated by a modern doctor: *Happiness is essentially a state of going somewhere, wholeheartedly, one-directionally, without regret or reservation.*

But see when God, the great Psychiatrist, comes into a person's life, He exercises His healing power, and restores his soul to a wholesome soundness of life, that person is immediately brought into a new, and all-absorbing understanding of the meaning of life. He has been restored to spiritual life and health in order *To glorify God and enjoy Him forever*, to serve Him in the coming of His Kingdom. He has been given his new spiritual healing for the single purpose of rising up, and following Christ. That, believe me, can be a matter of *Going somewhere, wholeheartedly, one-directionally, without regret or reservation.* This great experience of giving ourselves to Him Who is Bigger and Better than we ourselves is the divine solution for the human problem. It is the cure of the soul. It is the joyous, victorious experience of Christian faith. It is the only real cure for a world that is very, very sick indeed!